This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Memoirs of the life of Thomas Paine

W. T. Sherwin

Sharp, sculp.

THOMAS PAINE

Digitized by Google

US 4556.05

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY

FROM THE BEQUEST OF
JAMES WALKER
(Class of 1814)
President of Harvard College

"Preference being given to works in the Intellectual and Moral Sciences"

Digitized by Google

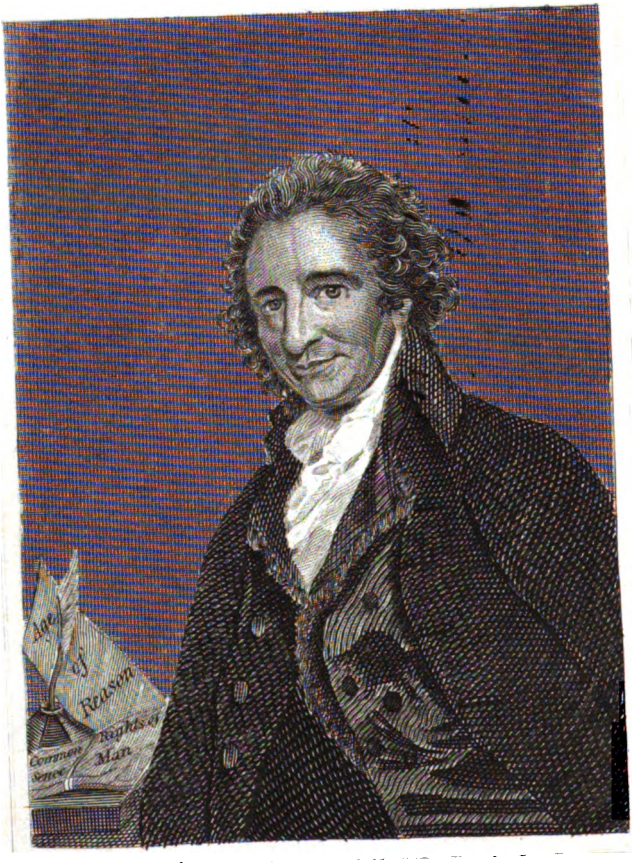
Digitized By Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



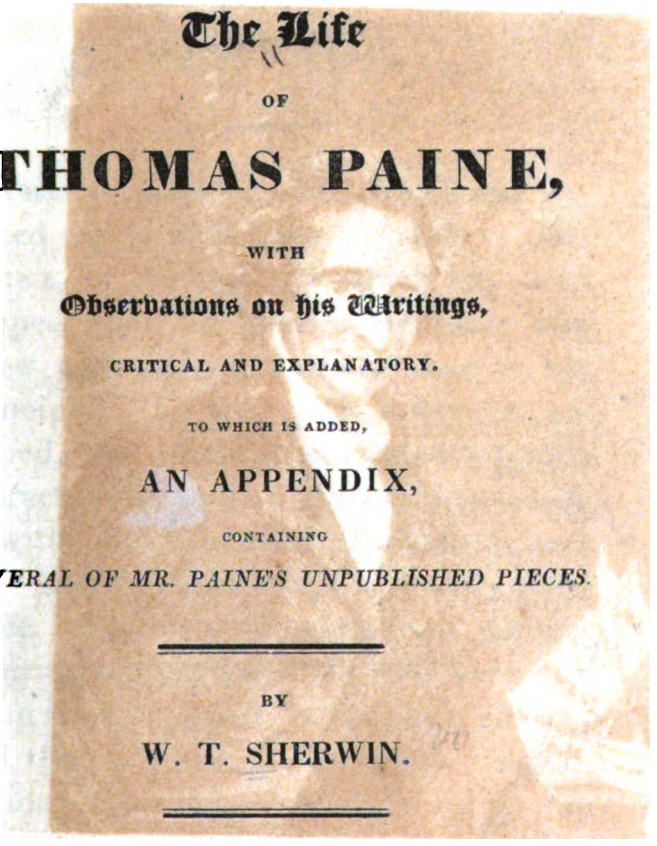
THOMAS PAINE.

Publishd as the Act directs by W. T. Sherwin May 1. 1819.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF



The Life

OF

THOMAS PAINE,

WITH

Observations on his Writings,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

SEVERAL OF MR. PAINE'S UNPUBLISHED PIECES.

BY

W. T. SHERWIN.

London:

PUBLISHED BY R. CARLILE, 55, FLEET STREET.

1819.

4121

Digitized by Google

US 4556.05
~~A 2776.3.11~~
1875, March 22
Walker Bequest.
(Vol. I.-LV.)

W. T. Sherwin, Printer,
Lower Smith Street, Northampton Square.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THE principal motive which has induced me to undertake the Life of Mr. PAINE, is the injustice which has been heaped upon his memory by those who knew nothing either of the man or his principles. It may with safety be affirmed, that there never existed a public character whose reputation has been assailed with more illiberality, or whose motives have been misrepresented with more virulence. To rescue his name from the undeserved reproaches which have been cast upon it by the panders of political infamy, and the partizans of cold-blooded superstition,—to render that justice to his character which interested clamour has hitherto withheld,—and to shew that his works contain nothing that is dangerous to the happiness of mankind, either indi-

Digitized by Google

vidually or collectively, are the principal objects of the following pages.—Whether I have succeeded, or not, must be left to the judgment of the reader; of this, however, I am certain, that if I have not, the failure rests with the biographer, and not with the subject.

Two lives of Mr. Paine have already appeared. The first of these was published about twenty-seven years ago, and purports to be the production of "Francis Oldys, A. M. of the University of Philadelphia." This work, though written with some ability, is filled with falsehoods which detect themselves, and which, consequently, need no refutation. It is, therefore, only necessary to state, that "Francis Oldys," was a fictitious name, adopted with no other view than that of giving currency to the book; that the real author was George Chalmers, at that period one of the clerks of the Board of Plantation, and that he was employed by Lord Hawksbury (now called Earl of

Digitized by Google

Liverpool) to write the work, for which he was to receive five hundred pounds, in the event of his executing it to the satisfaction of his employer. These facts have been admitted by the anonymous assassin, Chalmers himself, and they require no comment.

The second Life of Mr. Paine is the production of an English Emigrant, of the name of Cheetham. This was published at New York, in 1809. The writer, exclusive of his being a treacherous apostate, was an illiterate blockhead; his misrepresentations have not even the dress of decent language to recommend them, and the frequent contradictions with which the book abounds must entitle it to the contempt of every reader.

Such are the persons who have attempted to blacken the reputation of one of the most enlightened and benevolent men that ever lived. I trust the reader will find that I have adopted a very different course, that I have paid a scrupu-

Digitized by Google

lous attention to truth, and that, without considering whether it made for or against the subject I was writing upon.

Nearly ten years have elapsed since the death of Mr. Paine. An authentic account of his life cannot, therefore, be considered premature. Besides which, it is presumed that the last ten years have afforded some opportunities of trying the strength of his opinions. The pressure of public calamity has rendered those principles popular, which the mere force of reasoning could not; and however gloomy appearances may have hitherto been, there is now, it is to be hoped, some prospect, that "truth will force its way even to thrones."

The only ambition which I have had in writing the following pages is, that my statements should be accurate; and though the narrative may possibly in some instances be defective, from the difficulty of obtaining authentic information, yet, as a general outline of the character and

Digitized by Google

life of Mr. Paine, I trust it will be found both correct and complete.

The sources from whence I have obtained my information, are such as to place its correctness beyond all doubt. The greater part of my facts are derived from the personal and political friends of Mr. Paine, and the remainder from documents, the truth of which is indisputable. Towards the close of the work will be found an interesting Letter on the subject of his last moments, and as this document proves the fallacy of the general opinion respecting Mr. Paine's behaviour at that period, it will of necessity overthrow the inferences which the interested, the weak, and the ignorant have drawn therefrom. It will be some consolation to the conscientious unbeliever to know that Mr. Paine's death-bed recantation, about which we have heard so much, is an invented story, like those which were told about Voltaire, D'Alambert, and others who have held similar opinions.

Digitized by Google

A life more chequered, more eventful, more alternately distinguished by honours and misfortunes, was perhaps never recorded.—The undertaking has, with a few exceptions, been an agreeable one, and if the reader experience as much pleasure in perusing, as I have done in writing the work, we shall both be amply gratified.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF

The Life

OF

THOMAS PAINE.

IT has been frequently remarked, that the lives of eminent literary characters are little more than a recapitulation of their different works, with the dates and circumstances under which they were published. The secluded and obscure situation in which many of our most celebrated authors have lived and died, is a circumstance that in some degree sanctions the observation; but, however correct this may be, in many instances, there are numbers to which it is totally inapplicable. Amongst the exceptions to this rule, we shall invariably find our great *political* characters. The life of any man whose mind has been occupied in the researches of political literature must

Digitized by Google

necessarily be eventful; particularly, if his pen has been accustomed to move in unison with the feelings of his heart.

Of the men who have rendered themselves famous by originality of thought, boldness of conception, and ingenuity in political disquisition, none have attracted more attention than THOMAS PAINE. His fame, as a political writer, has extended to every part of the civilized world; and, were he now living, he might almost traverse the globe and say, "*wherever I go, my name has gone before me.*"

It is somewhat singular that so great a length of time should have elapsed, since the death of Mr. PAINE, without a single author, either in Europe or America, attempting to give an impartial and faithful account of his life. Different reasons may be assigned for the silence of his English admirers, but in the land of freedom, in the land where his principles have flourished and triumphed, in the land which almost owes its form of government to his genius, a person would have thought some honest biographer would have raised an avenging pen against the calumniators who have endeavoured to blacken his name. In the country where literature is a real republic, where the press is neither shackled by despotic

Digitized by Google

laws, nor corrupted by treacherous ministers, we are naturally led to suppose that tyranny would scarcely have found a supporter, or superstition an advocate. But the silence which has been observed towards the falsehoods that have been propagated against the character of Mr. PAINE is a proof that letters may be venal without being corrupt.

THOMAS PAINE, the subject of these memoirs, was born at Thetford, in the county of Norfolk, on the 29th of January, 1737. His parents were obscure as to birth, having nothing to depend upon, except what was derived from their own industry. His father, Joseph Paine, was a member of the society of Quakers, a person of sober habits and good moral character: he obtained a decent, but humble livelihood by following his trade, which was that of a stay-maker. The maiden name of his mother was Frances Cocke, the daughter of an attorney at Thetford, and a member of the established church. It was probably owing to the disagreement in the religious tenets of his parents that Paine was never baptized. He was, however, privately named, and through the pious care of his aunt, he was afterwards confirmed by the Bishop of Norwich.

At an early age, Paine was sent to the free

Digitized by Google

school at Thetford, where he was taught reading, writing, and accompts. Before he left this school, he likewise obtained a slight knowledge of the Latin tongue, but from the aversion or contempt which he subsequently acquired for the study of the dead languages, or from want of opportunity, it does not appear that they ever became the object of settled attention.

It does not seem, or at least it is not known, that, during his boyhood, he exhibited any peculiar signs of that genius which was afterwards to exalt him to the very pinnacle of political fame. But from a passage in the Age of Reason, it is evident, that however matured in judgment he might be before he became a politician, his first impressions on the subject of religion were made at a very early period of his life*.

---

* "From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea, and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system, or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was: but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the Son of God.* After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps, (for I perfectly

Digitized by Google

At the age of thirteen he was taken from school by his father, who, unable from his circumstances to apprentice him to any other trade, employed him as an assistant in the business of staymaking. Whether he was ever bound apprentice does not appear, nor is it a matter of much consequence. The sedentary shop-board had few attractions for our author, and he left it the first opportunity. After remaining with his father about three years, he left his native town, and proceeded to London, where he doubtless hoped to better his circumstances, conceiving, as many had done before him, that the metropolis was the only place where a youth can

---

recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way; and as I was sure a man would be hanged, that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had any thing in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had, that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner to this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion, that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system."—*Age of Reason*, Part I. p. 37.

Digitized by Google

attain a proper knowledge of the world, and the only scene where natural talent can find an opportunity of displaying itself to the best advantage. His mind, which nature appears to have formed for enterprize, was of too aspiring a turn to be restricted to the limits of a provincial town, or to brook the idea of being confined for life to a business which would not only have cramped his genius, but which at best would have afforded him but a scanty livelihood. His prospects in London, however, do not seem to have been at first much more inviting than those he had left in the country. On his arrival, he found himself without either friends or money, and destitute of the means of procuring any, except by again having recourse to the business he had just deserted. He applied to a Mr. Morris, a staymaker, in Hanover Street, Long Acre, of whom he procured employment for some weeks. From London he went to Dover, where he worked at his business for a short time, with a Mr. Grace.

How long a time elapsed from the period of his leaving his father to his quitting Mr. Grace does not appear, nor, if known, would it be a matter of much interest. Probably, not more than two or three months. Finding himself baffled in the expectations he had formed on quitting

Digitized by Google

his home, he left his second employer, and went on board the Terrible privateer, Captain Death. To a mind like his, which appears at the time we are speaking of, to have been ardent in the extreme, it is not surprising that the war which had just then been declared against France, afforded an abundant field of enterprising anticipation. Situated as he was, and feeling as he probably did, the army or the navy were his only choice, and he took the latter because it was nearest at hand. How long he remained on board the Terrible, has not been ascertained; but from his own account of the affair, the time must have been short. "From this adventure," says he, "I was happily prevented by the affectionate and moral remonstrance of a good father, who, from his own habits of life, being of the Quaker profession, must begin to look upon me as lost."

This affair made a considerable impression at the time, but, like most of the impressions of youth, it soon wore away, and left his disposition for enterprise in much the same state as it was, before the circumstance occurred. Shortly afterwards, he entered on board the King of Prussia privateer, Captain Mendez; but as no account has been published of this

Digitized by Google

transaction, except that given by himself, it does not appear how long he remained at sea, or what occurred to induce him to desert the naval profession altogether, and resume his own business.

In the year 1759, he settled at Sandwich as a master staymaker. There he soon became acquainted with a young woman of the name of Mary Lambert, to whom he was married about the end of the same year. She was the daughter of an exciseman, and is said to have possessed considerable personal attractions.

His staymaking business not exactly answering his expectations, he removed with his wife to Margate, where she died in the year 1760. From Margate he went to London, and from London he again removed to Thetford.

Here he resolved upon relinquishing his business altogether. He had long wished for some employment more congenial to his turn of mind. At length, through the interference of Mr. Cocksedge, the Recorder at Thetford, he obtained a situation in the Excise. This was towards the end of 1763.

For some trifling fault he was dismissed from this situation, in something more than a year afterwards. What the nature of that fault

Digitized by Google

was, has never been satisfactorily explained; but those who are acquainted with the practices of the excise, must be well convinced that if the offence had been of any magnitude, he would never have been restored to the office, which was the case in about eleven months after his dismissal. The following is a copy of his petition to the Board of Excise to restore him to his situation:—

"HONOURABLE SIRS,

"In humble obedience to your Honours' letter of discharge, bearing date August 29, 1765, I delivered up my commission, and since that time have given you no trouble.

"I confess the justice of your Honours' displeasure, and humbly beg leave to add my thanks for the candour and lenity which you at that unfortunate time indulged me with.

"And though the nature of the report and my own confession cut off all expectations of enjoying your Honours' favour then, yet I humbly hope it has not finally excluded me therefrom; upon which hope I humbly presume to intreat your Honours to restore me.

"The time I enjoyed my former commission was short and unfortunate—an officer only a single year. No complaint of the least dis-

Digitized by Google

honesty, or intemperance, ever appeared against me; and if I am so happy as to succeed in this my humble petition, I will endeavour that my future conduct shall as much engage your Honours' approbation, as my former has merited your displeasure.

"I am, your Honours' most dutiful
"humble servant,
"THOMAS PAINE."

London, July, 3, 1766.

"July 4, 1766.—To be restored on a proper vacancy. S. B."

It is difficult to guess what was the real cause of Paine's discharge from the excise, since from the above, it is clear that his offence was neither drunkenness nor dishonesty. Whatever it might be, it is evident that it was of a venial nature, for his enemies must have been acquainted with it, and if its tendency had been to impeach our author's moral character, they would have rendered it as public as possible. Instead of this, they have never even ventured a malignant surmise upon the subject, and if we couple their silence with the circumstance of his restoration, we have every reason to conclude that the ground of his discharge was of the most insignificant character. As for the

Digitized by Google

portion of the petition in which he confesses that his former conduct "has merited their displeasure," it was no more than the customary form of a petition from a man who was begging to be restored, and is therefore unworthy of observation.

After his dismission he proceeded to London, where he became a teacher in an academy kept by Mr. Noble of Goodman's Fields.* In this situation he remained until the period of his restoration to office. It is probable that it was during his stay in London at this period, he applied himself to the study of astronomy and natural philosophy, and that this is the time he alludes to, when he says, "as soon as I was able I purchased a pair of globes, and attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became afterwards acquainted with Dr. Bevis of the society called the Royal Society, and an excellent astronomer."† Indeed, as he himself expresses it, the natural bent of his mind appears to have been to

* As some have doubted the truth of this, I think it necessary to state, that I have a document in my possession, in the hand writing of a gentleman now residing at Camberwell, who was a pupil at Mr. Noble's academy at the period alluded to.

† Age of Reason, Part I. p. 36.

Digitized by Google

science, and though from his disadvantageous situation in life he necessarily met with many obstacles, it is evident from several of his productions, that he attained a great proficiency in mechanics, mathematics, and astronomy. It was from his being well-grounded in the principles of science, during the earlier part of his life, that he afterwards became such a powerful adept in reasoning; it was from the mathematical principles which had been engrafted on his mind while it was yet tender enough to receive the impressions of instruction, that he was subsequently enabled to write with such precision upon almost any subject, that he was enabled to reduce abstruseness to simplicity, to understand difficult subjects himself, and to render them intelligible to others.

On his re-appointment to the excise, our author immediately returned from London to Thetford, where he continued until the spring of 1768, when he was removed to Lewes, in Sussex. There he resided in the house of a person of the name of Ollive, a tobacconist. With him he remained upwards of twelve months, when the former died, leaving a widow, a daughter, and several sons. Our author then left the family for a short time, but soon afterwards returned, when he opened the shop on

Digitized by Google

his own account. In consequence of this, and of his having previously lived under the same roof, he soon contracted an intimacy with Miss Ollive, the daughter of his former landlord, whom he married in the year 1771.

It is said that about this time he wrote an electioneering ballad in favour of one of the candidates for the representation of New Shoreham, for which he received three guineas. As I have not been able to ascertain whether this is true or false, I offer no opinion upon it.*

In 1772 was written and printed, the *Case of the Officers of Excise.* This publication, which consists of about sixteen pages, has occasioned considerable dispute as to who is its author, some asserting, and others denying, that it was written by Paine. Those who have promulgated the latter opinion, have paid very little

* In the collection of our author's poetry recently published, there is a piece entitled "*The Trial and Execution of the Farmer's Dog,*" and as this relates to an electioneering affair at New Shoreham, there is reason to suppose that this is the piece alluded to. It is not, however, likely that Paine would receive three guineas for a production of this sort, since the author's amusement, and not the interest of either candidate, appears to be the only object for which the piece could be written.

Digitized by Google

attention to the style and method of our author. The same conciseness, clearness, and benevolence which form such prominent features in the future productions of Paine, are distinguishable in almost every page of the pamphlet in question. Exclusive of the "Introduction," it is divided into two parts,—"The State of the salary of the Officers of Excise," and "Thoughts on the Corruption of Principles, and on the numerous evils arising to the revenue from the too great poverty of the Officers of Excise." In the Introduction, is stated the design of the Excise Officers in all parts of the kingdom to make an application to parliament to have the state of their salaries taken into consideration. The subject is then entered upon and discussed with all the energy and ability which might have been expected from a long experienced advocate. The deductions that are made upon the exciseman's salary by unavoidable contingencies, and the danger to which his duty necessarily exposes him, are recapitulated in the most forcible manner. Under the second head, the policy of our author's object is insisted upon; he advises the Government to render their officers honest by relieving their necessities; and the

Digitized by Google

pamphlet concludes by enumerating the advantages that would be ensured by adopting the recommendation.

Of this pamphlet four thousand copies were printed by Mr. William Lee, of Lewes, but to what extent they were circulcated I have not been able to learn. It would doubtless be read with pleasure and avidity by the class of men who were interested in the result, but whatever might be the distresses of the excisemen, it was not likely that they would meet with much sympathy or encouragement from the public. The nature of their occupation, and the unpleasant mode in which the duties of it are performed, have always rendered them objects of public odium; and however misdirected or useless such odium may be, it will ever continue an appendage to the character of those who collect this tyrannical impost. The public, therefore, viewed the complaints of the excisemen with indifference, and though considerable exertions were made by various individuals, as well as our author, there was no member to be found to bring the subject before parliament. The distresses of the officers, and the consequent depredations on the revenue which our author had so ably pointed out, and so zealously endeavoured to get removed, were

Digitized by Google

not deemed of sufficient importance to merit parliamentary enquiry, and the proposal, like many other proposals for the removal of public evils, fell to the ground without investigation.

I have already observed, that on the marriage of our author with Miss Ollive, he commenced the business of a tobacconist, which he carried on in much the same method as his predecessor had done before him. This circumstance, as might have been anticipated, soon rendered him an object of suspicion in the eyes of the commissioners, and it is not improbable that the zeal which Paine had displayed in exposing the pernicious consequences of doling out so pitiful a provision to the active class of excisemen, while their betters were spending their days in ease and affluence, had rendered him an object of dislike amongst his superiors in office. The spirit of independence which he shewed on all occasions, and which there is very little doubt he communicated in a considerable degree to those around him, was but little calculated to ensure the approbation of persons who regard implicit obedience as the test of merit, who look upon a proposal for reform as a step towards revolution, and the protection of abuses as the only mode of pepetuating the blessings of our envied system

Digitized by Google

of government. Considerable pains were taken to discover some flaw in the conduct of Paine, but so strictly had he performed his duty, that nothing of any consequence could be substantiated against him. His keeping a tobacconist's shop was, however, a sufficient pretext with those who wished to rid themselves of so troublesome a servant, and he was a second time dismissed from the excise in April, 1774.

A cloud of misfortunes appeared at this time to be bursting on the devoted head of our author. In the same month that he was dismissed from the excise, his goods, and the property in his shop, were sold to pay his debts. In the following month he was separated from his wife. Various reasons have been assigned as the cause of this disunion, but the probability is, that the true one was never known, except to himself. It has been asserted, that from the period of their marriage to the day of their disunion, a space of three years and a half, they slept in different beds, and never cohabited together. But this idle tale is too improbable and too ridiculous to be believed by any class of persons, except a few of the most prejudiced and unthinking of our author's enemies. Indeed, it is difficult to

Digitized by Google

account for the invention of so singular and absurd a story, unless we attribute it to that envious malignity and despicable craft, which, unable to overthrow the productions of our author's genius, have been ever on the watch to deteriorate the private character of the man, as one of the modes of rendering his works unpopular amongst the weak-headed part of mankind. But, whatever may have been the cause, it is clear that articles of separation were drawn up and signed, by mutual consent, in May, 1774. I have been informed by some of the personal friends of Paine, that this was almost the only subject on which he was not communicative. There was nothing wonderful in this. It was in every point of view *his own concern;* and he might with justice regard any questions on the subject as the effect of inquisitive folly.

Our author was by this and prior events relieved from every tie which might be supposed to bind him to his country. Deprived of his home, and destitute of friends and employment, he had to commence life anew, and that without either credit or capital. His parents, were become much advanced in years; their industry was no more than sufficient to procure a mainte-

Digitized by Google

nance for themselves, and therefore Paine could not have derived, even if he had desired, any assistance from their kindness. The cheerless prospect which lay expanded before him, the misfortunes that had already befallen him, and the desolate situation in which he was then placed, must have impressed upon his mind the idea that to whatever country he went, it was impossible for his condition to become worse. In England there was no hope. Every change only brought an accumulation of fresh misfortunes. Borne down by poverty, and surrounded by difficulties of every description, his condition appears to have been that of a ruined, hopeless man. In this situation many would have sat down and perished without a struggle. But despair and dismay appear to have formed no part of Paine's character. He seems never to have sunk into the extreme of depression, or to have risen to that tumultuous gladness which so often accompanies the extreme of elevation. His mind appears never to have been crushed by defeat, or elated by success. The unshaken fortitude which can smile on disappointment and danger, and look serenely amidst the tumult of triumph, seems

Digitized by Google

to have been the most prominent feature in his character.

After the sale of his effects, and the separation from his wife were concluded, our author again went to London. By what means he procured a living during his stay in the metropolis is unknown, but soon after his arrival he obtained an introduction to Dr. Franklin, who advised him to go to America. The Doctor, probably perceived in his interviews with Paine, that he was a man possessed of abilities of no ordinary character, and this accounts for the readiness with which he furnished him with a letter of introduction to one of his most intimate friends in the United States. Our author was thus afforded an opportunity of beginning life again, and that at an age when his ardent and enterprising spirit must have been considerably tamed by the sharp lessons of adversity. He had, as he himself observes, "served an apprenticeship to life," and it is more than probable that those sublime ideas on the subject of liberty which were afterwards to raise his name so very high in the Temple of Fame, were produced by his early misfortunes.

"By woe the soul to daring action swells;
By woe in plaintness patience it excels;

Digitized by Google

"From patience, prudent, clear experience springs,
And traces knowledge through the cause of things!
Thence hope is formed, thence fortitude, success,
Renown:—whate'er men covet and caress."

SAVAGE.

Poverty is certainly not the parent of genius, but it is unquestionably its best preceptor. The finest productions we have in the language have been written by men whose intellectual powers have forced their way into life under circumstances of the most abject penury. In most instances it has happened that the fire of genius has been long confined by the heavy black clouds of adversity, before it acquired sufficient strength to burst its boundary; and as the streaming lightning is more or less vivid in proportion to the density or lightness of the clouds which encompass it, so it has generally proved that the powers of a fine imagination have been more or less brilliant, in proportion to the poverty or plenty by which the possessor was surrounded. The enlivening wit of Congreve, the melting scenes of Otway, the rural tenderness and pathetic simplicity of Goldsmith, and the dignified ease and elegance of Thomson, would have been unknown to us, if these luminaries in the hemisphere of literature had been born in a state of affluence; for though the men might have lived with much more comfort to

Digitized by Google

themselves than they did, it is very probable that the easy couch and plentiful board would have destroyed the inspiration which gave birth to their finest productions.

But to our author. He had by this time seen enough of the world to despise its follies, and he had witnessed too many of the bad effects of mis-government in this country to feel any affection for them, when directed against the country of which he was about to become a citizen. Dr. Franklin could not therefore have selected a man more likely to repay his kindness in vindicating the cause of the people, by whom he was deputed ambassador to England. Our author sailed from this country towards the end of the year 1774, and arrived at Philadelphia about two months afterwards.

From this period to the day of his death, the abilities of Paine never lay dormant. Very shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia he became acquainted with Mr. Aitkin, a respectable bookseller of that town. In January, 1775, Mr. Aitkin commenced the publication of the Pennsylvania Magazine, of which Paine became the editor. Many of the pieces in this publication are truly elegant. In these, as in most of his other writings, he is singularly happy in clothing an original boldness of thought, with a

Digitized by Google

peculiar beauty of diction. The article in which he treats of the hidden riches of the earth, and the diligence with which we ought to search after them, is a fine specimen of this rare combination. The well known song on the death of General Wolfe, appeared in an early number of this magazine, and it is unquestionably one of the most beautiful productions of the sort in the English language. The ideas would have done honour to any of the poets of old, and the poetry is an example of the most polished versification. As this little piece is still much admired, even by those who disapprove of its author's political and religious notions, I here insert it, as transcribed from an original copy:—

SONG

ON THE DEATH OF GENERAL WOLFE.

In a mouldering cave, where the wretched retreat,
Britannia sat wasted with care;
She mourn'd for her Wolfe, and exclaim'd against fate,
And gave herself up to despair.
The walls of her cell she had sculptured around
With the feats of her favourite son,
And even the dust, as it lay on the ground,
Was engraved with some deeds he had done.

Digitized by Google

The sire of the gods, from his crystalline throne,
Beheld the disconsolate dame,
And, moved with her tears, he sent Mercury down,
And these were the tidings that came:
Britannia, forbear, not a sigh, or a tear,
For thy Wolfe, so deservedly loved;
Your tears shall be changed into triumphs of joy,
For thy Wolfe is not dead but removed.

The sons of the east, the proud giants of old,
Have crept from their darksome abodes,
And this is the news, as in heaven it was told,
They were marching to war with the gods.
A council was held in the chambers of Jove,
And this was their final decree,
That Wolfe should be call'd to the armies above,
And the charge was intrusted to me.

To the plains of Quebec with the orders I flew,
He begg'd for a moment's delay;
He cry'd, "Oh forbear, let me victory hear,
"And then thy commands I'll obey."
With a darksome thick film I encompass'd his eyes,
And bore him away in an urn;
Lest the fondness he bore to his own native shore
Should induce him again to return.

In addition to the above, he wrote several other articles for the Pennsylvania Magazine, of considerable literary merit. These principally consist of a letter to the publisher on the utility of magazines in general;—Useful and enter-

Digitized by Google

taining hints on the internal riches of the Colonies;—Reflections on the Death of Lord Clive, and New Anecdotes of Alexander the Great. The Reflections on the Death of Lord Clive I have not seen, though I have been at considerable pains to procure them; but I have been informed that they contain much originality of thought, and that they caused the work to be sought after with great avidity. He likewise wrote for the same publication an elegant little piece in the form of a poetical dialogue, between a *Snow Drop* and a *Critic*, in which the former is made to describe the variety and pleasure intended to be conveyed to the public through the medium of the new work, in opposition to the cavilling objections of the latter. These productions are already in the possession of the public, and they serve to shew the versatility of our author's disposition.

According to the account given by Paine in one of his late publications he had no relish for politics during the early part of his life. The probability is that he saw the total impracticability of doing any good under the influence of such a system as the English Government; that the contests between the ministerial and opposition

Digitized by Google

parties were carried on with no other object in view than the acquirement of authority and emolument, and perceiving, as he must, the ease with which the people had so repeatedly become the prey of their leaders, he shunned the study of politics as an agitated sea where no good could be gained, and where reputation was sure to be lost. There was at the time we are speaking of no such thing as a real interest in favour of the people; the struggle was entirely confined to a couple of court cabals, who, however violently they might be opposed to each other, were equally opposed to the welfare of the country.' It is not, therefore, surprising that Paine should at this period look upon politics as a "species of jockeyship." But however he might feel on the subject of party politics, it is a well authenticated fact that he had imbibed his anti-monarchical notions before his departure from this country. An anecdote is related of him which places this in a clear point of view. He happened one day to be playing at bowls with some friends at Lewes; after they had finished playing, they went to a neighbouring house to drink some punch by way of refreshment. Mr. Verral, one of the bowlers, observed,

Digitized by Google

in allusion to the wars of Frederick, "that the King of Prussia was the best fellow in the world for a King, he had so much of the Devil in him." This observation, trifling as it might appear, produced a very deep impression on the mind of Paine, and gave rise to the reflection, that *if it were necessary for a King to have so much of the Devil in him, Kings might be very well dispensed with.* If we could unveil the secret causes which have in various ages of the world created great actions, and produced great events, we should probably find that they were originally owing to circumstances as trivial in their nature as the above observation on the character of the King of Prussia. A single accidental idea will sometimes open a field of just and generous reflection, which might otherwise have remained for ever in the womb of thought. Had the circumstance above alluded to never occurred, America would probably at the present moment have been weeping beneath the scourge of British despotism. This will appear more clearly as we proceed.

The genius and elegance which Paine displayed in his first literary productions, and the talent which he possessed for philosophical discussion, naturally procured him an easy introduction to many persons of the first conse-

Digitized by Google

quence in America. His papers were read with a degree of pleasure bordering on enthusiasm, and the unaffected diffidence of their author ensured him the respect and friendship of all who enjoyed his society.

In a few months after the arrival of Paine in America, the English Government commenced hostilities against the colonies at the battle of Lexington. As he bore so conspicuous a part in the events which followed, and as every thing which relates to the great and glorious struggle for independence is interesting, it may not be improper to give a slight sketch of the causes which produced this event.

The colonies of America, from the original settlement of the colonists to the year 1763, had been regarded by the English Government in a mere commercial point of view. The original settlers, as well as the individuals who afterwards went there, were persons of almost every nation in the world, and, generally speaking, their object in emigrating was either to find a place of security from the persecutions of their own governments, or to improve their condition by removing to a country where there was a better market for their industry and ingenuity. It has been justly observed, that the English Government had no right to exercise dominion

Digitized by Google

over a people of this description, but at the period when the English originally claimed them, the Americans foresaw that if they did not become the subjects of Britain, they must shortly submit to some other European power. This consideration, coupled with the conduct of the government which did not at that period attempt to render them objects of revenue, induced the colonists to submit without opposition. But when they began to increase in strength, numbers, and wealth, to an extent which perhaps neither party at first anticipated, they soon became objects of jealousy in the eyes of the British King and parliament. The astonishing progress they had made in cultivating what was originally a trackless wilderness, and the increase of their manufactures and commerce, began to awaken the avaricious feelings of European extortion, and the attention of the cabinet was directed to the discovery of some scheme by which they might be enabled to carry their wishes into effect. But whatever plan the ministry might devise, it was invariably resisted by the Americans. The parliament supported the King in what was called his right of sovereignty, and the King in return asserted the right of the parliament to tax the

Digitized by Google

Americans at pleasure. For twelve years the controversy was carried on upon paper, but as the arguments of the Americans did not supply the English exchequer with taxes, and as the declarations of the government did not quell the spirit of resistance which prevailed throughout the colonies, the blind infatuation of the ministry determined them on taking more decisive steps to ensure obedience to their decrees, and compliance with their demands. In pursuance of this determination several acts were passed laying very severe restrictions upon the commerce of the colonies, and amongst them was an act imposing a duty of three-pence per pound upon all tea imported from India. This was accompanied by the stamp act, which threw the whole continent into a complete state of ferment and confusion. The latter decree was in many parts of the colonies carried about the streets, where it was exposed to every species of indignity, and afterwards publicly burnt by the enraged multitude. In consequence of the alarm that was occasioned by these proceedings, the stamp act was repealed, but its place was supplied by a declaratory act still more obnoxious. This latter document was filled with the most absurd and senseless parade

Digitized by Google

about the authority of the mother country, her power was described in the most pompous and ridiculous terms, and it concluded by declaring the right of the King and parliament, *to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.* A continued series of oppressive enactments succeeded this declaration, and the English ministry finding it was useless to combat the Americans with manifestoes and proclamations on the duty of obedience, they determined to enforce it by the terror of their arms. A spirit of hostility on both sides now became universal. This led to the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775.

But notwithstanding this hostility towards the government, few thought, and still fewer expressed their thoughts, in favour of a declaration of independence. The colonies had first from interest, and afterwards from habit, looked upon England as their protector; and though they disputed her tyranny, they did not wish to dispense with her government. They wished to consider her as a disinterested friend, rather than as an inveterate enemy. Speaking the same language, governed by the same habits, and connected by affection as well as by interest with the people of this country, they were very unwilling to think of a final separation. They

Digitized by Google

rebelled against the despotism of the government, but they considered the people as their friends, and they were ready to make any moderate sacrifice of the former, for the purpose of preserving their connexion with the latter.

With this disposition for reconciliation the Congress, on the 8th of July following, agreed to petition the King of Great Britain, to devise some mode by which an amicable adjustment of all existing differences might be concluded. The style of the petition was humility itself, and the substance moderation. It was presented to the King on the 1st of September, and in three days afterwards Mr. Penn, the bearer of it from America, was informed by Lord Dartmouth, that "*no answer would be given to it.*"

In about a month afterwards, this decision was received by the Congress, and its effect upon the people was beyond all precedent. An absolute unconditional submission, or an immediate resistance to the tyranny of the British government, was now their only choice. The pleasing vision of reconciliation was banished from their minds, and the only alternative that presented itself was the wretchedness of unconditional slavery, or a general and

Digitized by Google

united revolt against the claims of the government. For some months the public mind was undecided on the course that ought to be pursued. Some were for war, others were for submission; and owing to the fear which frequently attends the conduct of men who are ignorant of their own strength, many of those who were loud in expressing their detestation of the government in point of principle, disapproved of resistance as a matter of policy. A feeling of indignation was universally diffused throughout the colonies, but few were disposed to risk their lives and property in a contest of which none appeared able to foresee the termination. The doctrine of independence was a novelty,—it had hitherto been very slightly advocated by its friends, and they, from want of numbers and influence, or from the timidity naturally attendant on newly-started notions, were looked upon as dangerous or designing characters, whose conduct was more deserving of censure and suspicion than applause or imitation.

In this crisis of opinion, this interval of contention between fear and principle, the pamphlet, *Common Sense*, made its appearance. Its immediate effect defies the powers of de-

Digitized by Google

scription. Its arguments and principles were calculated for all minds and dispositions; the old and the young alike embraced its doctrines as the only means left of procuring permanent peace; the poor regarded them as their only hope, and the rich as their only security. The timid soon became animated with courage; the doubts of the wavering were decided by conviction; the treacherous, alarmed at the decisive turn of the public mind, were afraid to shew themselves on the theatre of popular discussion; and transformed, as it were, in an instant, by a burst of celestial inspiration, the whole continent breathed a universal appeal to the god of freedom. Our author had struck the chord of nature, and all hearts beat in unison with his generous principles.

This exquisite little performance was published in January, 1776, and its circulation was beyond that of any other work since the invention of printing. Its effect on the public mind can only be estimated by the events which followed its publication. On the 4th of July, in the same year, the Americans declared themselves independent of the government of England, which event, as Paine himself observes, took place as soon as the work could

Digitized by Google

be circulated through such an immense extent of territory.

The pamphlet commences with an Essay on the origin and design of Government, to which are added some observations on what is usually termed the English Constitution. The distinction between society and government, which are by so many writers confounded with each other, is delineated with great brevity, force, and perspicuity. The principal excellence of the performance is the vast accumulation of ideas which is presented in a few words. The author's sentiments burst upon the mind of the reader like a torrent, and conviction is irresistible. In two short paragraphs he clears away the prejudice and sophistry which had prevailed for ages, respecting the origin, design, and effects of society and government; he shews them to be distinct and separate institutions; the one formed for protecting the virtues of mankind, and the other for punishing their vices.

Having thus prepared the mind of the reader for a candid and complete examination into the nature of existing establishments, he proceeds systematically to dissect the parts and expose the abuses of the English government. His observations on this subject are unanswerable.

Digitized by Google

He derides the idea of a union of three sorts of government reciprocally checking each other, and concludes, as every rational man must do, that such a system is either an absurd contradiction, or a mask for tyranny.

The remainder of *Common Sense* is divided into three more essays, to which is added an Appendix. The first of these treats on monarchy and hereditary succession, the second on the state of American affairs at the time the work was written, and the third on the ability of the continent to assert and maintain its independence: the Appendix contains some observations on the King's speech, delivered at the opening of Parliament in 1766, with some additional arguments on the impolicy and impracticability of a reconciliation with the English government.

In his remarks on monarchy and hereditary succession, he seizes upon every weapon that is likely to answer his purpose. He was not content with exposing these absurdities by the mere force of human reason; he cites the circumstances in the sacred writings relative to the folly of the Jews, in revolting from a government instituted by heaven itself, in order that they might gratify their folly and meanness by

Digitized by Google

bending before the throne of a despotic King. The pious, as well as the political, feelings of the Americans were thus roused in opposition to the oppressive conduct of the mother country; their spiritual notions became blended with their worldly interests; and it is not going too far to suppose that the former were of considerable use in confirming their zeal for the latter. That which was deemed an unpardonable sin in the conduct of the Jews, was represented as equally deserving of punishment if imitated by the Americans; and though the majority of the people must have been convinced of the folly of kingly government from reflection and conviction, it is more than probable that their number received an extensive addition from those who had piously made the scriptures their rule of faith in this world, and their ground of hope in another.

Under the head of Thoughts on the state of American affairs, he uses every argument that could be devised to interest the pride, the reason, and even the prejudices of the people in favour of independence. The folly in supposing that the vast continent of America was destined to remain the passive subject of the little island of Britain; the oppressions which

Digitized by Google

had been heaped on the colonists in consequence of this scandalous subjection; the murderous proceedings of the British agents; the manifest absurdity of suffering an individual, like the King of England, to say to several millions of people older and wiser than himself,—"I forbid this or that act of yours to be law,"—are all dwelt upon with great force, feeling, and ingenuity. The concluding parts of the pamphlet consist of a repetition of the same arguments. The menacing prospect of fresh indignities, the inhuman character of the man, who with "the pretended title of father of his people could unfeelingly hear of their slaughter," and the images of their martyred countrymen, are placed before the minds of the Americans in the most glowing and energetic language.

The talent with which *Common Sense* was written caused the public to suspect that Paine was not the real author. Some attributed it to Mr. Samuel, others to Mr. John, Adams; a variety of other public characters were honoured with the same imputation, but the most prevalent idea was, that it was written by Dr. Franklin. In mentioning the Doctor's name as connected with this subject, I cannot refrain from relating

Digitized by Google

an anecdote which sufficiently refutes the groundless insinuations that have been put forth respecting his attachment to the government of the "mother country." He happened one day to be in company with a lady who had paid some little attention to the study of politics, and their discourse turning on the subject of *Common Sense*, she expressed her astonishment that the Doctor could be so vulgar as to call the King of England "the royal brute of Britain."* The Doctor assured the lady that he was not the author of the pamphlet, and joined her in reprobating the title, "for," said he, "I should have been very sorry to have so dishonoured the brute creation."

But though it was soon afterwards made clear that Dr. Franklin was not the author, a report was circulated with industrious malignity, that it was submitted to him and Mr. Samuel Adams, for correction and alteration. The following extract from the *Crisis*, which appears to have been written for the purpose of correcting the report, will clear away the effects

* "But where, say some, is the King of America? I will tell you, friend,—he reigns above, and does not make havock of mankind, like the Royal Brute of Britain." *Common Sense*, p. 33.

Digitized by Google

of this envious insinuation; for it is not to be supposed that Paine would make a false declaration respecting gentlemen with whom he lived upon terms of the closest intimacy, which was the case with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Samuel Adams, at the time the following was written:—

"Dr. Franklin, Mr. Samuel and John Adams were severally spoken of as the supposed author. *I had not, at that time, the pleasure either of personally knowing, or being known to the two last gentlemen.* The favour of Dr. Franklin's friendship I possessed in England, and my introduction to this part of the world was through his patronage. I happened, when a school boy, to pick up a pleasing Natural History of Virginia, and my inclination from that day of seeing the western side of the Atlantic never left me. In October, seventy-five, Dr. Franklin proposed giving me such materials as were in his hands, towards completing an history of the present transactions, and seemed desirous of having the first volume out the next spring. I had then formed the outlines of *Common Sense*, and finished nearly the first part; and as I supposed the Doctor's design in getting out a history, was to open the new year with a new system, I expected to surprise him

Digitized by Google

with a production on that subject, much earlier than he thought of; *and without informing him what I was doing*, got it ready for the press as fast as I conveniently could, and sent him the first pamphlet that was printed off." *Crisis, No.* 3, p. 49.

The above is a conclusive evidence, that the work was the entire and exclusive composition of its ostensible author.

As soon as Paine observed the eagerness with which *Common Sense* was sought after by the Americans, he took the most effectual method of shewing his own disinterestedness, and of propagating the principles he had so powerfully advocated, by relinquishing the copy-right in favour of the public. It was reprinted in every state of the union, and the interest it excited by its contents was so great, that in a few months after its appearance scarcely a family was to be found without it. It served as the political bible of the people, its arguments were as popular, and its doctrines nearly as sacred, as if they had been dictated by divine inspiration. Such are the powers of genius when arrayed beneath the banners of freedom.

I have already observed, that *Common Sense*

Digitized by Google

was published in January, 1776, and that independence was declared on the 4th of July in the same year. The time was now arrived when our author was to take an active as well as a decisive part in public affairs. The declaration of independence had removed the scene of political warfare from the closet to the camp, and it was now become necessary to try the strength of public patriotism by bringing it into the field of military operations. Warlike preparations were immediately set on foot by the Americans. Many individuals of respectability volunteered their services in support of their country's freedom, and amongst the foremost of them was Mr. Paine. In this capacity he was introduced to the friendship of the Marquis de la Fayette, who was likewise serving as a volunteer in the American army. The officers treated our author with every possible mark of respect, at their tables he was hailed as a welcome guest, and General Washington himself neglected no opportunity of shewing the high opinion he entertained of his talents and integrity.

At the time our author joined the army its head quarters were in the neighbourhood of New York. The British forces, under General

Digitized by Google

Howe, were using every effort to gain possession of the latter place, while Washington was endeavouring by every stratagem to frustrate their intention. Notwithstanding the spirit which had been excited amongst the people, their troops were at this period in a very undisciplined condition. The Americans were strongly animated by the principle of resisting oppression, but from inexperience they were ignorant of the practice. The greatest efforts of those who had stood foremost amongst the advocates for independence were therefore necessary, and it is but justice to say, that these distinguished individuals displayed a degree of activity and courage worthy of the cause they had espoused. To repair the disordered state of the American troops was the first object of consideration. A recruiting was therefore commenced without delay, and the army was soon increased from ten to thirty thousand men. General Washington very judiciously distributed them on York Island, Long Island, Governor's Island, and other posts, where, undisciplined and inexperienced as the soldiers were, it became an hazardous undertaking to attempt to dislodge them. The British General was at this time

Digitized by Google

waiting for reinforcements and supplies from England, under the command of his brother, Admiral, afterwards Lord Howe. These shortly arrived, and on the 22d of August, 1776, the greatest part of the British troops landed on Long Island. A few days afterwards they attacked the Americans, and after a determined resistance the latter were completely defeated.

In consequence of this event, it became necessary to evacuate Long Island, which was performed with such skill and care, that the English troops, though not above six hundred yards distant, were wholly unacquainted with the measure until it was completed.

The effects produced by this defeat on the minds of the soldiers was such as might have been anticipated. They were impressed with the belief that the English troops were their superiors in every point of view, they dreaded the idea of contending with a race of men who considered carnage as a trade, and practiced it as a duty; who had been nursed in the very lap of civilized butchery, and whose bravery, whether deservedly or not, was proverbial all over the world.

In this state of affairs our author's pen was

Digitized by Google

not idle. Soon after the defeat on Long Island he produced the first number of the *Crisis*.* This is a continuation of the arguments advanced in *Common Sense*, to which are added some most powerful appeals to the patriotism and courage of the Americans. The following is a specimen of this energetic production:—

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer-soldier and the sun-shine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it *now* deserves the thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered: yet we have this consolation with us, that the

* In the edition of Paine's political works recently published, there occurred an error with which it is proper the reader should be made acquainted. The article which is there inserted as the first number of the *Crisis*, is not, from all I can collect, the production of Paine. A friend has lately favoured me with a copy of the *English Crisis*, (a work entirely distinct from that written by Paine) in which I find the first number in the edition lately published inserted verbatim, under the signature of *Casca*. The error was copied from an edition published a few years ago by Eaton, in Newgate Street. I have since seen several editions, in all of which the piece is omitted. This shews clearly that it could not have been written by Paine, and its insertion in the edition, published by Eaton, can only be attributed to the ignorance of the person who furnished him with the copy.

Digitized by Google

harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to set a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right, not only to tax, but 'to bind us in all cases whatsoever;' and if being bound in that manner is not slavery, there is no such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious; for so limited a power can belong only to God."

The remainder of the piece is written much in the same style as the foregoing; the political situation of the continent is investigated in a manner which shews that the writer possessed a thorough knowledge of his subject, and of the means necessary to rouze a despairing people to exertion. The intention of the author was to cheer the drooping hopes of the Americans, to re-animate the feelings, and to recruit the numbers of the army, which at that period had doubly suffered from defeat and desertion. This object completely succeeded. The paper was read with astonishing avidity, and its effect

Digitized by Google

upon the people and the soldiers was greater than could have been expected, by even the most sanguine friends of freedom. Courage was revived, confidence was renewed, and hope supplied the place of general gloom.

The brilliant action which took place in the same month at Trenton, has been justly named as one of the effects of this animated and animating production. The vigour and ability with which this affair was managed, coupled with the capture of the Hessians, gave a decisive turn to the war. The British, elated and blinded by their previous advantage, had formed a very contemptuous opinion of the military skill and resolution of the Americans, and fancying the conquest of the colonies to be as certain as their late attack had been successful, they cantoned their troops in Burlington, Border Town, Trenton and other towns of New Jersey, where they remained in daily expectation of being able to cross the Delaware by means of the ice; this river being the only barrier between the British and American armies. General Washington received information of their numbers and intention, and observing the improved condition of his troops, resolved to be before-hand with the British, at

Digitized by Google

least in the attack. In the evening of Christmas day the General made arrangements for crossing the Delaware in three divisions, but owing to the obstructions of the ice, only one division, the main body, succeeded in passing over. With this body of men he contrived to surround the Hessians, encamped at Trenton, before they had time to form, who, perceiving the inutility of resistance, laid down their arms, and surrendered prisoners. These were immediately conveyed across the Delaware for security. The General then recrossed the river and took possession of Trenton. The British force that had been distributed in different cantonments over New Jersey, was then collected, and was shortly joined by another army under Lord Cornwallis. The situation of the Americans at this moment was truly critical. To retreat was to hazard the city of Philadelphia, and to destroy every ray of hope which had began to dawn from the late success. To risk an action with a superior force in front, and a river in the rear, was dangerous in the extreme. To get round the advanced party of the British, and by pushing forward to attack in their rear, was deemed preferable to either. The British, on their advance from Princeton, about four in the after-

Digitized by Google

noon attacked a body of Americans, which were posted a little to the northward of Trenton, and compelled them to retreat. The pursuing British being checked at the bridge over Sanpink Creek, which runs through that town, by some field pieces, which were placed on the opposite banks of that rivulet, fell back so far as to be out of the reach of the cannon, and kindled their fires. The Americans were drawn up on the other side of the creek, and in that position remained till night, cannonading the enemy, and receiving their fire. In this critical hour, two armies, on which the success or failure of the American revolution materially depended, were crowded into the small village of Trenton, and only separated by a creek in many places fordable. The British believing they had all the advantages they could wish for, and that they could use them when they pleased, discontinued all further operations, and kept themselves in readiness to make the attack the following day. The next morning presented a scene as brilliant on the one side as it was unexpected on the other. Soon after it became dark, General Washington ordered all his baggage to be silently removed, and having left guards for the purpose of deception, proceeded by a circuitous

Digitized by Google

rout to Princeton. This manœuvre was determined upon, in a council of war, from a conviction that it would avoid the appearance of a retreat, and at the time the hazard of an action in a bad position; and that it was the most likely to preserve the city of Philadelphia from falling into the hands of the British. Washington also presumed that from an eagerness to efface the impressions made by the late capture of the Hessians at Trenton, the British commanders had pushed forward their principal force, and that, of course, the remainder in the rear at Princeton was not more than equal to his own. The event verified his conjecture. The more effectually to disguise the departure of the Americans from Trenton, fires were lighted up in front of their camp. These not only gave an appearance of going to rest, but concealed from the British what was transacting behind them.

The Americans reached Princeton early in the morning, where a smart engagement took place between them and the British troops stationed there. The greater part of the latter were finally taken prisoners, and the remainder made their escape to Trenton.

I have been thus particular in going through

Digitized by Google

the detail of this affair, for several reasons. Its singularity as a master-stroke of military tactics would be a sufficient excuse for its introduction here, but when we consider the hazardous situation in which the Americans were placed at the time it happened, and when we recollect that the fate of their independence in a great measure rested upon the success or failure of their arms at Trenton, its omission would have been an unpardonable oversight. It will likewise be necessary to recur to the description of this extraordinary affair, for an elucidation of some of our author's future performances.

The second number of the *Crisis* was published at Philadelphia, in January, 1777. It consists of a letter to Lord Howe. His Lordship, infatuated by the same haughty spirit which had blinded his employers at home, had published a proclamation in the name of the King, commanding "all such persons as were assembled together under the title of general or provincial congresses, committees, conventions, or other associations by whatever name or names known or distinguished, to desist and cease, from all such *treasonable actings and doings.*" To display the absurdity of such a

Digitized by Google

proclamation as this, needed not the talents of Paine. Such a piece of buffoonery, however seriously performed, was too palpable to create any other feeling than that of just derision. The period of alarm and deception had fled for ever. It was too late in the day to excite the fears of the Americans by a vain parade of usurped authority, the people understood their rights and were determined to maintain them, and a proclamation like this was a complete burlesque on the authority it was intended to establish. It was a perfect mockery of the king's prerogative, and an insult to the army whose misfortunes it was intended to console.

From ridiculing the absurd pretensions of the proclamation, the author proceeds to some general observations on the impolicy of the war, the conduct of the English General, and the inability of the Government to conquer America. The wanton barbarity of the British army is described in terms, which must have suffused even the cheeks of its dissipated and thoughtless commander with the blush of shame. Amongst other cruelties committed by his troops, there is one which I think is without parallel in the history of civilized warfare. It would dishonour the character of even the Goths and

Digitized by Google

Vandals. The soldiers were incited to perseverance against the Americans by an unlimited permission to plunder the defenceless citizens of whatever property they could discover, and the appetite for destruction at length became so insatiable, that during the ravages of the English army in the Jerseys, mahogany furniture was deliberately laid on the fire for fuel, rather than the men should be fatigued with the trouble of cutting wood! These wanton barbarities, instead of subduing the resolution of the Americans, united them more firmly to each other, and strengthened their abhorrence of the men who were endeavouring to reduce them to a state of vassalage.

In speaking of the temporary nature of the sufferings of the Americans arising from the ravages of the enemy, and the restrictions on their trade, the writer thus endeavours to incite his readers to fresh exertions: "What are the inconveniencies of a few months to the tributary bondage of ages? The meanest peasant in America is a happy man, compared with a New York tory; he can eat his morsel without repining, and when he has done can sweeten it with a repast of wholesome air; he can take his child by the hand and bless it, without feeling the con-

Digitized by Google

scious shame of neglecting a parent's duty." The idea at the close of this quotation is common enough, but in passing through the hands of Paine, it acquires a new form, which gives it all the appearance of originality.

The third number of the *Crisis* was published at Philadelphia, in April, 1777. It consists of an elaborate recapitulation of the arguments in favour of independence, interspersed with miscellaneous reflections. Amongst other things he notices the address published by the Quakers, in which they had professed themselves to be friends of peace, and deprecated the conduct of the Americans, in taking up arms against the King of Great Britain. To counteract the effects of this paper, a meeting had been called at Philadelphia, from which was issued an address of an opposite tendency. From commenting on the proceedings of the Quakers, our author proceeds to offer some observations on the state of the currency. The mischiefs arising from the plan adopted by Congress, of issuing paper-money, were beginning to be felt, and the necessity of reducing the circulating medium was becoming very evident. After shewing the necessity of the case, our author proceeds to the means. As the cause appeared

Digitized by Google

to be so decisively in favour of the Americans, it was requisite that the characters of individuals should be known, in order that the votaries of the King of Great Britain might be exposed to public justice, or at least to popular reprobation. As a means of facilitating the former, and at the same time of remedying the evils of the currency, Paine proposes a plan of imposing the oath of allegiance to the American government to every individual, and to lay a tax upon those who refused to take it. The proposal was a politic plan for detecting those who were treacherous from principle, and for converting those who were so from an interested or mistaken motive of securing the good opinion of the British government, but it does not appear that the recommendation was ever followed. It may be doubted whether, as a tax, it would have been productive to the revenue, for whatever attachment men may profess to feel towards despotism, they seldom like to employ their pecuniary means in defence of its authority.

Our author had by this time completely established his fame as a political writer, not only with the people, but with the Congress of America. As a testimony of the esteem and

Digitized by Google

confidence which were reposed in him by the latter, he was unanimously, and without any previous knowledge on his part, elected secretary to the foreign department. "This," says he, "was agreeable to me, because it gave me the opportunity of seeing into the abilities of foreign courts, and their manner of doing business." He now left the army for the purpose of attending his official duties.

As several misrepresentations have gone forth to the public on this subject, it is necessary so say a few words respecting the nature of the situation.

At the commencement of the war, a committee of a certain number of members of Congress had been formed for the management of foreign affairs. A considerable portion of abuse has been bestowed upon Mr. Paine, for calling himself the "Secretary for Foreign Affairs," when he was, in fact, no more than the secretary of the *committee*. But this arises from a perversion of terms, more than from any assumption of Paine. His business was to write and to receive all letters relative to the foreign affairs of the United States; he had an office allotted to him for the purpose; there was no circumstance whatever, connected with the foreign relations of Ame-

Digitized by Google

rica that did not come to his knowledge, even before it was known to Congress, and if these duties do not entitle a man to call himself a "Secretary for Foreign Affairs," it is difficult to determine what are the duties attached to that situation. But to bring the matter more to the point, let us ask what are the official duties of an *English* Secretary for foreign affairs? Does not he act under the direction of the *Cabinet*, and, strictly speaking, what is the Cabinet more than a *Committee*, answering to the Committee of which Paine was appointed Secretary? The title entirely corresponds with the duties which appertained to the situation, and the charge of assumption is absurd and frivolous. The blind folly of men who write with an intention to pervert and misrepresent, was never more glaring than in the conduct of those who have cited this circumstance as a proof of Mr. Paine's inconsistency. So eager, and withal so indiscreet have his enemies been, that they have endeavoured to promulgate an opinion that Paine was in secret an approver of titles, a distinction which in his works he so unequivocally condemns. But it should be remembered, that Paine never reprobates titles so long as they

Digitized by Google

are associated with office or character. For instance, he does not object to the title of Judge, General, Colonel, President, or any other appellation conferred upon a man for the sake of official distinction. It is the title which means *nothing*, and which by the caprice of nature, or accident of circumstances, may happen to mean *any thing*, that Paine reprobates and ridicules. It is the unnatural law of primogeniture—the inheritance of a power which may be abused with impunity, and which can never be used with advantage, that he censures with so much severity. But with respect to a title to which duties are attached, he on all occasions admits its necessity.—I have, perhaps, been more particular in exposing the futility of these misrepresentations than the subject deserved, but as this is one of the principal grounds on which he has been calumniated, I conceived that silence would be taken for an admission of the truth of the charge. From this specimen the reader may form some idea of the credit due to those who have traduced the memory of Paine.

The business of his new situation did not prevent our author from attending to his literary pursuits. In September, 1777, he published the fourth number of the Crisis. It is

Digitized by Google

very brief, and appears to have been written on the spur of the moment, in consequence of some trifling advantages which had been gained the day before by the British.

The fifth number of the *Crisis* was published at Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, March, 1778. It consists of a Letter addressed to General Sir William Howe, and an Address to the Inhabitants of America. The advantages gained by General Howe he considers of so trifling a nature, as rather to prove the impotence of his troops, than to shew their ability to prosecute their object. He cites the retreat of the British as a confirmation of this conclusion. He ridicules with considerable force the vanity of attaching importance to titles, and the pretensions which Sir William had set forth to the esteem of the Americans. He is very severe on the mean and cowardly conduct of Sir William in distributing forged Continental Bills. If this charge were true, and the evidence given is too conclusive to admit of its being doubted, it is a most disgraceful circumstance to those employed in carrying on the war.* In the

* The only parallel to this proceeding, that I have ever heard of, is the conduct of Pitt towards the French in

Digitized by Google

conduct of an army there are certain acts which we consider dishonourable, and which a commander who values his character will always be careful to prevent. These are not laid down by any law, because, when countries are at war with each other, law is totally out of the question: they depend on the disposition of a General and the discipline of his troops. But of all the low, drivelling practices that were ever resorted to by an army to distress a people with whom it was at war, the project of forging their bills is the most despicable. It is in a moral sense what assassination is in a physical sense, and ought never to be resorted to except as a measure of retaliation. It is, however, impossible to reprobate the practice in stronger terms than Paine has done in the publication before us. "You, Sir," says he in the address to Sir William,

---

1795.——It has been said that Mr. Pitt was the inventor of this cowardly species of warfare, but this the reader will perceive to be an unfounded supposition. Not that I wish to deprive Mr. Pitt of any of the infamy of such an expedient. I merely mention it to shew that in one of his most dishonourable schemes, he was no more than a common imitator.

Digitized by Google

"have abetted and patronized the forging and uttering counterfeit continental bills. In the same New York newspapers in which your own proclamation under your master's authority was published, offering or pretending to offer pardon and protection to the inhabitants of these States, there were repeated advertisements of counterfeit money for sale, and persons who have come officially from you, and under sanction of your flag, have been taken up in attempting to put them off. A conduct so basely mean in a public character is without precedent or pretence. Every nation on earth, whether friends or enemies, will join in condemning you. It is an incendiary war upon society which nothing can excuse or palliate.—An improvement upon beggarly villainy,—and shews an inbred wretchedness of heart, made up between the venomous malignity of a serpent, and the spiteful imbecility of an inferior reptile." The severity of these reproaches finds an apology in the circumstances of the case, for though the language is harsh, it is nevertheless just, and the fault lies with the person who deserves, not with he who applies it.

There, perhaps, is not any species of composition which in a few years becomes so dry and

Digitized by Google

insipid as disquisitions upon the politics of the day, and those writers who have been able to give to such a subject a permanent interest, must be allowed to possess talents of a superior description. The ability displayed by Paine in the productions before us has conferred a lasting importance on events which, passing through the icy medium of distant history, would have met with but little attention. He makes us *feel* as well as *see* the objects he is writing upon, and though in some instances he does not attempt to give his language that high polish of which it is susceptible, yet we soon discover the intrinsic value of his sentiments, and we respect the rough exterior as an evidence of the author's sincerity, while a multitude of graces would only tend to bring his motives into suspicion.

The subsequent part of the letter to General Howe discovers a fund of thought, penetration, and feeling. Though I intend to be as brief as possible in making extracts from works which cannot be properly appreciated unless they are perused entire, yet the following is so prophetically true, that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it:—

"There is something in meanness which

Digitized by Google

excites a species of resentment that never subsides, and something in cruelty which stirs up the heart to the highest agony of human hatred. Britain has filled up both these characters till no addition can be made, and hath not reputation left with us to obtain credit for the slightest promise. The will of God hath parted us, and the deed is registered for eternity. When she shall be a spot scarcely visible among nations, America shall flourish, the favourite of heaven, and the friend of mankind."—If the implicit supporters of arbitrary power and orthodox despotism will not admit Paine to have prophesied from inspiration, it is to be hoped they will allow him to possess the merit of sound judgement and rational reflection. At all events, his calumniators cannot deny that the foregoing prediction is fast verging towards its fulfilment. Our author concludes No. 5, with an address to the inhabitants of America. In this he exhorts them to fresh perseverance, and after an elaborate description of the situation of the respective armies, he closes by proposing a plan for recruiting the American forces.

The sixth number of the *Crisis* was published at Philadelphia, in October, 1778. The subject is a letter to the Earl of Carlisle, General

Digitized by Google

Clinton, and William Eden, Esq. British commissioners at New York. These gentlemen, in opposition to all the dictates of reason and experience had issued a proclamation calling upon the rebellious Americans to renew their allegiance to the King of Great Britain, whom they pompously described as the "rightful sovereign" of America. The treaty which had recently been concluded between America and France appears to have been the principal cause of this fresh display of folly. The pains which the poor commissioners were at to make themselves and their royal master appear ridiculous, were in strict conformity with the blundering policy which had given rise to their appointment, and their promises and pardons, their flattery and threats were alike unavailing. The government of England, instead of being looked upon as an affectionate parent, was now regarded as an unnatural monster, who had sought to strangle her infant offspring. Even those who at first had been the most zealous friends of reconciliation, were by this time deprived of all their long cherished hopes, for they clearly saw that a re-union with the British government would be the certain forerunner of the most abject slavery. The pretensions and

Digitized by Google

offers of the commissioners were therefore either spurned as an insult to the people, or ridiculed as a silly display of imaginary power. And when to this state of things we add the previous capture of General Burgoyne, their situation becomes truly pitiable. With such materials to work upon, it is impossible that a man of any ability would write ill, and we therefore need not wonder that they furnished Paine with the ground-work of one of the best numbers of the *Crisis*. As any anaylysis of this production would not tend in any degree to do justice to the writer's merits, I shall avoid making extracts from this as well as the subsequent numbers, recommending to the reader an attentive perusal of the whole, as the only mode of enabling himself to appreciate the talents, perseverance, and patriotism of the author.

The seventh number of the *Crisis* was published at Philadelphia, November 21, 1778. It consists of a letter to the people of England. The object of the number appears to have differed in some degree from that of its immediate predecessor, the one being written for the purpose of convincing the government, and the other of proving to the people the improbability of subduing America. The delusive

Digitized by Google

hopes with which the ministry had amused the nation, the disgrace which must attend the hitherto invincible armies of England, and the wickedness of any man in even wishing those armies to be successful, are exposed with an ability which must have been most severely felt by the enemies, and warmly applauded by the friends of independence. The number likewise contains some excellent reflections on the subject of national honour, and the mischievous effects of national vanity.

In January, 1779, our author resigned his situation of Secretary for Foreign Affairs. This resignation was in consequence of a disagreement which had taken place between the Congress and Mr. Paine, respecting a person of the name of Silas Deane. In the early part of the war it appears that this man had been employed by the committee of foreign affairs as an agent in France, for the purpose of obtaining supplies, either as a loan from the French government, or, if he failed in this, to purchase them as regular merchandize. Without waiting the issue of his separate mission, he was soon after nominated with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Lee, who proceeded to the court of Louis for the same purpose. The French monarch, more

Digitized by Google

perhaps from his hostility to the English government than from any attachment to the American cause, gladly acceded to the request, and the supplies were immediately furnished from the King's arsenal. As France was then to all appearance upon amicable terms with England, a pledge was given by the American commissioners that the grant should remain a secret. The supplies were accordingly shipped in the name of a Mr. Beaumarchais, and consigned to an imaginary house in the United States. Deane, taking advantage of the secresy which had been promised by the commissioners, presented a claim for compensation in behalf of himself and Beaumarchais, thinking, perhaps, that the auditing committee would prefer a compliance with his fraudulent demand rather than expose their ally, the King of France, to a rupture with England. At first there appeared an inclination to comply with his request, and Mr. Paine perceiving this, and knowing the circumstances of the case, resolved on laying the transaction before the public. He according wrote for the newspapers several essays under the title of "Common Sense to the Public on Mr. Deane's Affairs." In these he exposed, without ceremony, the dishonest

Digitized by Google

designs of Deane. The business in consequence soon became a subject of general conversation; the demand was rejected by the auditing committee, and Deane himself soon afterwards absconded to England.

For this piece of service to the Americans our author was thanked and applauded by the body of the people, but by this time a party had began to form itself whose principles, if not the reverse of independence, were the reverse of republicanism. These men, as individuals, had long envied the popularity of Mr. Paine, but from their want of means to check or controul it, they had hitherto remained silent. An opportunity was now offered for venting their spleen. Mr. Paine, in expressing his indignation against the claims of Deane, had mentioned one or two circumstances that had come to his knowledge in consequence of his office; a plan was immediately formed for depriving him of his situation, and, accordingly, a motion was made by one of the members for an order to bring him before the Congress. Mr. Paine readily attended, and on being asked whether the articles in question were written by him, he replied that they were. He was then directed to withdraw. As soon as he had left the house,

Digitized by Google

a member arose and moved, "That Thomas Paine be discharged from the office of secretary to the committee for foreign affairs," but the motion was lost upon a division. Mr. Paine then wrote to Congress, requesting that he might be heard in his defence, and Mr. Laurens made a motion for that purpose, which was negatived. The next day he sent in his resignation, concluding with these words:—"As I cannot consistently with my character as a freeman submit to be censured unheard; therefore, to preserve that character and maintain that right, I think it my duty to resign the office of secretary to the committee for foreign affairs, and I do hereby resign the same."

This conduct on the part of the Congress may in some degree be attributed to a desire to quiet the fears of the French ambassador, who had become very dissatisfied in consequence of its being known to the world that the supplies were a present from his master. To silence his apprehensions, and preserve the friendship of the French court, they treated Paine with ingratitude. This they acknowledged at a future period by a grant, of which we shall have occasion to speak in its proper place.

Digitized by Google

Our author was now deprived of the means of obtaining a livelihood, and not being disposed to render his literary labours subservient to his personal wants, he engaged himself as clerk to Mr. Biddle, an attorney at Philadelphia.

Mr. Paine's dispute with the Congress produced no change in his patriotism. On every occasion he continued to display the same degree of independence and resolution which had produced his first animated efforts in favour of the republican cause. Neither personal altercation nor pecuniary embarrassments had any effect upon his principles. He had enlisted himself as a volunteer in the American cause, and he vindicated her rights under every change of circumstance, with the unabated ardour of a freeman.

Soon after the resignation of his secretaryship our author was chosen clerk of the legislature of Pennsylvania. This appointment is a proof that, though he had some enemies, he had many friends, and that the insidious insinuations of the former had not been enabled to weaken the attachment of the latter.

In March, 1780, Mr. Paine published the eighth number of the *Crisis*. The subject of this is a second address to the people of

Digitized by Google

England. It is written much in the same style as the one which preceded it. From all that had taken place it was apparent, that America was beyond the reach of conquest, and seeing this, he very properly asks the English people what their motive was in protracting a contest which appeared to be fraught with nothing but self-destruction. He dwells with great emphasis on the calamities of war, and represents the people of England as ignorant of any of its effects, except that of taxation. He could not have had a better opportunity of depicting the miseries of military contention, and the portrait he has drawn is natural as life.

In June following, he published at Philadelphia the ninth number of the *Crisis*. This seems to have been written for the purpose of consoling the Americans for the loss of Charlestown, which had recently fallen into the hands of the British. He reasons with considerable force and ingenuity on the insignificance of such a conquest, and consoles his readers by reflecting that similar misfortunes were unavoidable during a state of local warfare, and that they were in some measure advantageous, inasmuch as, without endangering the real safety of the country, they were sufficiently injurious to

Digitized by Google

prevent its being lulled into the lap of false security.

In the beginning of October, 1780, our author published at Philadelphia a long discussion on the subject of taxes, under the title of a *Crisis Extraordinary*. He draws a comparison between the extent of taxation in the respective countries of England and America, he shews from calculation that the former exceed the latter in more than a tenfold degree, and concludes by recommending the plan of Congress, that of funding its paper, and issuing a new coinage as a substitute. Notwithstanding the determined hostility of the Americans towards the English, their army was considerably oppressed for want of pecuniary means, and to this cause, more than to any other, we may attribute the apparent hardiness of their operations about this period. In the course of his reflections he takes an opportunity of repeating his former arguments against the tyranny, folly, and avarice of the English government, he treats the difficulties of the country as affairs of a temporary character, which a little privation and perseverance would speedily remove.

While those financial discussions were pending, the Congress resolved upon attempting

Digitized by Google

a more effectual plan for removing the public embarrassments, than could be derived from any application of the internal resources of the States. Mr. Paine drew up a letter to Count Vergennes, stating the difficulties in which the country was placed, and concluding with a request that France would either as a subsidy, or as a loan, supply the United States with a million sterling, and continue that supply annually during the war. This letter Mr. Paine first shewed to M. Marbois, the French minister's secretary. He objected to the application by observing, that "a million sent out of a nation exhausted it more than ten millions spent in it." Our author was not to be baffled in his design by this rebuff, and he accordingly presented his scheme to Mr. Isard, member for South Carolina. This gentleman readily agreed to bring the subject before Congress, which he did very shortly afterwards. The Congress after a very short discussion, acceded to the proposal, and a mission to the Court of France was resolved upon immediately.

Colonel Laurens, son of the late president of Congress, was appointed to negociate the affair, and at his anxious solicitation Mr. Paine accompanied him to Paris. They sailed in

Digitized by Google

February, 1781, and arrived in France the following month. Their mission was attended with more success than was expected. They obtained six millions of livres as a present, and ten millions as a loan borrowed in Holland on the security of France. They sailed from Brest at the beginning of June, and arrived at Boston in August, having under their charge two millions and a half in silver, exclusive of a ship and a brig, laden with clothing and military stores.

From the account which Mr. Paine gives of himself, it appears that he had some time previous to this event formed a design of coming over to England for the purpose of exposing to the people the folly and perversity of their rulers. "I was," he observes, "strongly impressed with the idea, that if I could get over to England without being known, and only remain in safety till I could get out a publication, that I could open the eyes of the country with respect to the madness and stupidity of its government."* He would have carried his intention into effect almost immediately, but for the advice of his friend General Greene, who it appears fully approved of the plan, but the affair

* Rights of Man, Part II. p. 70.

Digitized by Google

of Arnold and André happening shortly afterwards, the General altered his mind, and wrote very pressingly to Mr. Paine to dissuade him from his design. With some reluctance he consented to adopt the General's advice, both parties conceiving that his personal safety would be greatly endangered by any attempt at that time to carry his scheme into practice.

During our author's voyage to France with Colonel Laurens, another event occurred which confirmed the propriety and practicability of this project. An English packet from Falmouth to New York, was taken by a French privateer, and, owing to an artful stratagem of the French captain, the government dispatches in the packet were secured and brought on board his vessel. They were sent to Paris to the French minister, Count Vergennes, who after reading them presented them to Colonel Laurens and Mr. Paine, to be conveyed to America for the information and use of Congress.

What the contents of these dispatches were is not known, but it appears that they afforded Mr. Paine a better opportunity of judging of the perfidy and intrigue of the English Cabinet than could have been done by any other means. This circumstance renewed his former plan

Digitized by Google

respecting the British government, but Colonel Laurens being unwilling to return alone, Mr. Paine was induced to postpone its execution to a more favourable opportunity.

But to return to the affairs of America. In March, 1782, Mr. Paine published at Philadelphia the tenth number of the *Crisis*. The King of England, probably with a view of keeping the people in good humour with the expenses of the war, had delivered a speech at the recent opening of parliament in which the Americans were abused, and the English flattered, without any regard to truth or propriety. On this document our author delivers his opinion in terms of the severest reprobation. He satirizes the pretensions of the King to the title of sovereign of a free people, and draws an interesting parallel between the hardships of the Americans and those they would have suffered had the British been victorious. He concludes the number with an address to the people of America on the financial affairs of the States.

In May, 1782, he published at Philadelphia the eleventh number of the *Crisis*,—"On the present State of News." It had been conjectured and rumoured that the object of the British cabinet was to detach France from

Digitized by Google

America, for the purpose of making a separate peace with the former, in order that she might be enabled to bring her whole force against the independence of the latter. However absurd and dishonourable such an attempt might appear, it would have been no more than a continuance of the policy which had induced the ministry to persist so long in a war where there was neither hope to encourage, nor principle to sanction their conduct. The present number appears to have been written with a view to inform the public that such a design had been contemplated by the British court, and that want of means alone had prevented it from being carried into execution.

In the same month, Mr. Paine published a supernumerary *Crisis*, consisting of a letter to Sir Guy Carleton. This is a most forcible appeal to the English General respecting the barbarous murder of Captain Huddy, by a refugee of the name of Lippincot. Captain Huddy of the Jersey militia, with a small party of Americans, had been attacked and taken prisoner by an armed force in the pay of the British, and carried into New York. About three weeks afterwards he was taken down to the water side, put in a boat and brought again upon the Jersey shore where he

Digitized by Google

was atrociously murdered, under the direction of the refugee before mentioned. General Washington, determined that such an act should not pass away without punishment, directed that lots should be cast by the British prisoners for the purpose of selecting a victim in return for the murder of Captain Huddy. The lot fell upon Captain Asgill, and Mr. Paine's letter to Sir Guy Carleton was written with a view to induce him to give up the murderer, and save the life of a brave and innocent officer. It does not appear that this request was ever complied with, and Asgill, after suffering all the suspense, misery, and despair, which naturally attend such a situation, was at last pardoned through the humanity of the American General.

In October, 1782, our author published at Philadelphia a letter to Lord Shelburne, (afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne:) this has since been classed as the twelfth number of the *Crisis*. It is throughout an excellent production. The policy of concluding a peace with America, and acknowledging her independence, had on several occasions been discussed, but Lord Shelburne, unable to discover the propriety of the measure, and acting under the influence of that silly vanity which forms so noble an attribute of the

Digitized by Google

free-born Englishman, had declared that "the sun of Great Britain would set whenever she acknowledged the independence of America." The sentiment contained in this declaration is treated with a poignant satire which must have been severely felt by the party with whom it originated.

The war was now fast drawing towards a conclusion, and America was about to enjoy the benefits of the liberty for which she had so long and so ardently contended. The British Cabinet was at length convinced of the total impossibility of conquering the Americans, and the operations of the English declined in proportion as this conviction became more general. A definitive treaty of peace was set on foot at Paris towards the end of the year 1782, and concluded a few months afterwards. The triumphant situation of America, the grand and glorious effect of her courage and constancy, is admirably described by Mr. Paine in the last number of the *Crisis*. He congratulates the country on the happy conclusion of "the times that tried men's souls," he dwells with pleasure on the fair character which America had established amongst the nations of the world, and observes with truth that she need never be ashamed to

Digitized by Google

tell her birth, or relate the stages by which she rose to empire.—Shortly after the publication of this piece, Mr. Paine wrote a reply to a pamphlet by Lord Sheffield, on the subject of American commerce. This is classed with our author's previous productions as a supernumerary *Crisis*.

To have preserved an exact chronological order, we ought to have noticed two other pamphlets, written by him some time previous to the cessation of hostilities. The first of these is entitled *Public Good*, being an examination of the claim of Virginia to the vacant western territory. The method in which the case is investigated discovers all the acuteness and ability which might be expected from the author, but as the subject is not now a matter of interest, particularly to the European reader, it is not here necessary to enter into the discussion. There is, however, one circumstance connected with the performance which ought not to be omitted, as it serves to shew the disinterested character of Mr. Paine, and his determination to publish his opinions unbiassed and unshackled, even though they should militate against his own private interests. The part which our author espoused in the dispute

Digitized by Google

was in *opposition* to the claim of Virginia, though it was well known to him at the time that a proposition was pending before the assembly of that State, for granting him a pecuniary compensation for his writings in favour of independence. Before the publication of *Public Good*, the majority of the members were decidedly in favour of the grant, but on the appearance of the pamphlet they suddenly changed sides, and the motion was lost by a single vote! Such is the reward of ingenuous patriotism and a love of truth. With facts like this before us, we may cease to wonder that so many seemingly disinterested individuals in every age and country are continually drawn into the vortex of sycophancy and apostacy.

In 1782, he published a letter to the Abbe Raynal. The object of this letter was to clear up the mistakes, and expose the errors into which the Abbe had fallen in his history of the American Revolution. Amongst other things, the Abbe had asserted that none of those energetic causes which had produced so many revolutions upon the globe existed in North America;—that neither religion nor laws had there been outraged,—that the blood of martyrs had not streamed from scaffolds,—that morals had not

Digitized by Google

been insulted,—that neither manners, customs habits, nor any other object dear to nations, had there been the sport of ridicule; and that the only question was whether the mother country had or had not a right to lay a small tax upon the colonies. To correct and refute such misrepresentations as these, a reference to facts was barely necessary. They were almost too palpable to require a confutation, and the popular character of the Abbe in the literary world alone accounts for their obtaining a currency. That such a warm and enlightened friend of humanity and freedom, as the Abbe Raynal, should be mistaken in his ideas of the American Revolution, is at first astonishing; but men who from their cradles have been surrounded by despotism, and who have only contemplated the blessings of liberty as a distant though delightful vision, are incapable of forming an opinion on so great an event. A long habit of beholding the acts of tyranny almost unfits the mind for the contemplation of any other object, and to this more than to any other cause must be attributed the mistaken conjectures and disordered statements of the Abbe Raynal.

From a comparison between some of the Abbe's observations, and those contained in

Digitized by Google

Common Sense on the subject of society and government, it appears that the Abbe had borrowed very freely from the latter. Some of his remarks are a literal transcript, with the exception of a few words.—Amongst other things which he had mis-stated, was the account of the affair at Trenton, which I have already had occasion to notice. The Abbe had described this as a mere accidental occurrence, falling, as he says, "within the wide empire of chance." This was a very unjust and ungenerous reflection. The highest praise was due to the American General and his troops, as the reader will perceive by turning to the account of the action, and it is to be regretted that such a distinguished writer as the Abbe Raynal should have been misled on the subject, for no person could have done it more justice.

After exposing the Abbe's errors and misrepresentations, Mr. Paine indulges himself in a variety of philosophical reflections. The following description of prejudice is so replete with originality and beauty, that I cannot forbear quoting it:—

"There is something exceedingly curious in the constitution and operation of prejudice. It has the singular ability of accommodating

Digitized by Google

itself to all the possible varieties of the human mind. Some passions and vices are but thinly scattered among mankind, and find only here and there a fitness of reception. But prejudice, like the spider, makes every where its home. It has neither taste nor choice of place; and all that it requires is room. There is scarcely a situation, except fire and water, in which a spider will not live. So, let the mind be as naked as the walls of an empty and forsaken tenement, gloomy as a dungeon, or ornamented with the richest abilities of thinking; let it be hot, cold, dark, or light, lonely or inhabited, still prejudice, if undisturbed, will fill it with cobwebs, and live, like the spider, where there seems nothing to live on. If the one prepares her food by poisoning it to her palate and her use, the other does the same; and as several of our passions are strongly characterized by the animal world, prejudice may be denominated the spider of the mind."

The spirit of universal philanthrophy which formed so conspicuous a feature in Mr. Paine's character, the powerful effect of his writings in favour of independence, and the talent which he possessed for philosophical and mechanical discussion, rendered his society a

Digitized by Google

valuable acquisition. Of his friendship with Dr. Franklin, and several other distinguished individuals, we have already had occasion to speak, and of the esteem in which his services and character were held by General Washington, we have several very unequivocal proofs in his conduct towards the end of the war. Soon after the definitive treaty of peace was concluded, the General took up his quarters at Rocky-Hill in the neighbourhood of Princeton, (where the Congress was then sitting,) for the purpose of resigning his commission. There he was informed that Mr. Paine had retired to Borden-Town, where he had a small property. Conceiving, probably, that Mr. Paine's circumstances were not in the most flourishing condition, he very kindly wrote to him the following letter:—

"Rocky-Hill, Sept. 10, 1783.

"I have learned since I have been at this place, that you are at Borden-Town. Whether for the sake of retirement or economy, I know not. Be it for either, for both, or whatever it may, if you will come to this place, and partake with me, I shall be exceedingly happy to see you at it.

Digitized by Google

"Your presence may remind Congress of your past services to this country; and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who, with much pleasure, subscribes himself

"Your sincere friend,

"G. WASHINGTON."

Mr. Paine was urged by several of his friends to make an application to Congress for a compensation for his revolutionary writings, but this he uniformly refused to do. That the man who had been the means first of rousing the country to a declaration of independence, and whose writings had afterwards very materially contributed to the attainment of the object, was deserving of remuneration, no one could deny; but Mr. Paine's services in this respect being entirely of a voluntary nature, he could not consent to petition the Congress for a pecuniary recompense. His writings, however meritorious and serviceable they might have been, (and the most illiberal of his calumniators do not deny that their effects were great and universal,) were dictated by the pure principles

Digitized by Google

of disinterested patriotism, and he could not degrade their character by converting them into a medium of sordid emolument.

I am well aware of the attempts which have been made to shew that Mr. Paine's patriotism was not of that disinterested nature here described, and when we see that these attempts are founded upon the resolutions of Congress itself, it is not surprising that they should have been attended with some success amongst the weaker part of mankind. A short explanation will, however, do away with the impressions which such reports are calculated to produce. Before offering any observations on the subject, we will first insert the resolutions as extracted from the Journals of Congress :—

" Friday, August 26, 1785.—On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Petit, and Mr. King, to whom was referred a letter of the 13th from Thomas Paine :—

"Resolved, That the early, unsolicited, and continued labours of Mr. Thomas Paine, in explaining and enforcing the principles of the late revolution, by ingenious and timely publications upon the nature of liberty and civil government, have been well received by the citizens of these States, and merit the approba-

Digitized by Google

tion of Congress, and that in consideration of these services and the benefits produced thereby, Mr. Paine is entitled to a liberal gratification from the United States."

"Monday, October 3, 1785.—On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Long, to whom were referred sundry letters from Mr. Thomas Paine, and a report on his letter of the 13th of September:—

"Resolved, That the board of treasury take order for paying to Mr. Thomas Paine the sum of three thousand dollars, for the considerations mentioned in the resolution of the 26th of August last."

That the Congress granted, and that Mr. Paine received the three thousand dollars above mentioned, are facts beyond dispute. The only error is in the wording of the two resolutions, which makes the grant appear the reverse of what it really was. The case was this:—The salary which Mr. Paine received as Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs was very small, being only eight hundred dollars a year, and the depreciation which took place in consequence of the immense and repeated issues of paper money, reduced even this to less than a fifth of its nominal value. Mr. Paine, aware of the diffi-

Digitized by Google

culties in which the Congress were placed, forbore to harrass them with any applications for money during the war, but after it was closed he addressed to them a letter requesting that they would make up the depreciation, with some other incidental expenses which he had been at in the discharge of his official duties. The letter was referred to a committee, of which Mr. Gerry was chairman. This gentleman came to Mr. Paine and informed him that "the committee had consulted upon the subject, that they intended to bring in a handsome report, but they thought it best not to take any notice of Deane's affair or Mr. Paine's salary."—"They will indemnify you," said he, "without it. The case is, there are some motions on the Journals of Congress for censuring you with respect to Deane's affair, which cannot now be recalled, because they have been printed. We will, therefore, bring in a report that will supersede them, without mentioning the purport of your letter."

The grant was therefore an indemnity to Mr. Paine for the depreciation in his salary as secretary of the committee, and the reason for couching it in the terms above quoted, was to shield the Congress from a confession of the

Digitized by Google

injustice they had done our author for his conduct during the disputes about the claims of Silas Deane. It was no more than he had a right to expect, and those who granted it had not much reason to boast of their "liberality," in performing what was merely an act of pecuniary justice. So much for the grant of three thousand dollars, the false language in which it is clothed, and the malevolent insinuations which it has given rise to.

But though Mr. Paine had resolved not to make any application to the Congress on the score of his literary labours, he had several friends in the provincial assemblies who were determined that his exertions should not pass unrewarded. I have already spoken of the proposition that was made to the assembly of Virginia for this purpose, and the cause of its failure. Similar motions were brought before the legislature of Pennsylvania and the assembly of New York, the former of which gave him £500, and the latter the confiscated estate of a Mr. Frederick Devoe, a royalist. This estate, situated at New Rochelle, consisting of more than three hundred acres of land in a high state of cultivation, with a spacious and elegant stone house, besides extensive out buildings, was a valuable acqui-

Digitized by Google

sition; and the readiness with which it was granted, is a proof of the high estimation in which Mr. Paine's services were held by one of the most opulent and powerful States in the Union.

In 1786, he published at Philadelphia his "Dissertations on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money." The Bank alluded to was the one which had been established some years before, under the name of the "Bank of North America." Whatever opinion may be entertained of these institutions in general, it is evident that the one in question had been of considerable service to the Americans, during the most eventful period of their struggle for independence: to say the least, it was therefore entitled to their gratitude. But when men find themselves in a state of ease and security, they are too apt to forget the means by which they obtained these advantages, and the Bank, without any regard to its past services, was attacked as an establishment at variance with every principle of private security and public freedom.—In the pamphlet before us Mr. Paine gives an elaborate and interesting account of the rise and progress of the institution, and as he was one of the first promoters

Digitized by Google

of the scheme, a short account of it here will not be altogether unnecessary.

The beginning of the year 1780 was a very distressing season for the Americans. The people, though not conquered, were depressed; the soldiers, though not driven from the field, were destitute of resources, and such was their condition, that General Washington was for a considerable time in the daily dread of a general mutiny. In this state of affairs he addressed a letter to the Pennsylvania assembly, describing in the strongest terms the nature of his situation. At that period Mr. Paine was clerk of the assembly, and, as a part of his duty, he was requested to read the letter. When this was done, he informs us, "a despairing silence pervaded the house." No one ventured to speak for a considerable time. At length one of the members arose and said, "If the account in that letter is a true state of things, and we are in the situation there represented, it appears to me in vain to contend the matter any longer. We may as well give up at first as at last." Another of the members, more cheerful than the last, rose and expressed his hope that the house would not be overcome by despair, that the only way to get over the difficulty was by exertion; and a

Digitized by Google

motion for adjournment being made, the assembly separated without coming to any conclusion.

America was, indeed, at this period in a most critical situation. There now appeared no chance of retrieving her affairs by taxation, for the people were already overburthened, and the only mode that presented itself was that of a voluntary subscription. There was no time to be lost, and, as a beginning, Mr. Paine immediately on his return from the house drew the salary due to him as clerk of the assembly, and inclosed five hundred dollars in a letter to Mr. M'Clenaghan, proposing to him to commence a subscription, as the only means of alleviating the wants of the army. This gentleman shewed the proposal to several others, who fully approved of it; a subscription was commenced, and after being attended with considerable success, the subscribers formed themselves into a bank, which soon answered all the purposes for which it was intended. In 1782, the subscribers were legally incorporated under the title of the Bank of North America, which they held with advantage to the public until the unceremonious attack before alluded to. In this attack there was as little attention paid to

Digitized by Google

justice as to decency; petitions were poured in from all quarters, representing the Bank as a dangerous institution; and praying for the repeal of the act of incorporation; and what was very singular, a select committee had been chosen by the assembly, which fully sanctioned this shameful violation of private property and public principle. In his "Dissertations," Mr. Paine combats with great warmth the pretensions of the committee, and exposes the want of honesty in their recommendations. His efforts had the effect desired, the clamour against the Bank subsided, and those who had been the instruments of it were convinced of the injustice and folly of their proceedings.

We are now to follow Mr. Paine to a different scene from that in which he had been a prominent performer for nearly thirteen years. His desire of attacking the English government on the spot where its principles were still in full operation, had suffered no change or abatement, and as America no longer stood in need of his services, he resolved on putting his project into execution as soon as possible. In April, 1787, he set sail from the United States for France, and arrived in Paris after a short passage. His knowledge of mechanics and natural philosophy

Digitized by Google

had before his departure procured him the honour of being admitted a member of the American Philosophical Society; he was likewise appointed Master of Arts by the University of Philadelphia. These academic honours, though not of much consequence in themselves, were the means of introducing him to several of the most scientific men in France, and soon after his arrival he exhibited to the Academy of Sciences in Paris, the model of an iron bridge which had occupied much of his leisure time during his residence in America. This ingenious and useful production received the most unqualified approbation of the Academy, and it is but justice to Mr. Paine to observe, that his recommendations on this subject have been sanctioned and adopted by some of the most enlightened characters of the present age. Amongst those who have given their opinion on the subject, we ought to notice Sir Joseph Banks, who in a Letter to a Friend in America, published some years ago, says, "I expect many similar improvements from your countrymen, who think with vigour, and are in a great measure free from those shackles of theory which are impressed on the minds of our people,

Digitized by Google

even before they are capable of exerting their mental faculties to advantage."

From Paris Mr. Paine proceeded to London, where he arrived on the 3d of September. Before the end of that month he went to Thetford to see his mother, who by this time was borne down by age and penury. His father, it appears, had died during his absence; and he hastened to the place of his birth, to relieve the wants of his surviving parent. He led a recluse sort of life at Thetford for several weeks, being principally occupied in writing a pamphlet on the state of the nation, under the title of *Prospects on the Rubicon.* This was published in London towards the end of the year 1787. The purport of the work is an investigation of the causes and consequences of the politics expected to be agitated at the approaching meeting of parliament. A great variety of subjects are introduced, not only on government in general, but on what is usually termed political economy. The principal portion of it is occupied with a discussion on the then unsettled state of the affairs of Holland, and a comparison between the population, revenues, wealth, and general condition of France and England. The French revolution was at this period beginning to bud

Digitized by Google

forth, a spirit of enquiry was diffusing itself over the land, while in this country the people were sunk into a state of torpid lethargy.—"The people of France," Mr. Paine observes, "were beginning to think for themselves, and the people of England were resigning up the prerogative of thinking."

During the year 1788, Mr. Paine was principally occupied in building his bridge. For this purpose he went to Rotherham in Yorkshire, in order that he might have an opportunity of superintending the castings of iron, which were executed under the direction of his ingenious friend Mr. Walker, the proprietor of the foundry at that place. For a copious account of the success which attended this project, the reader is referred to the author's letter to Sir George Staunton in the Appendix. This gentleman, who it appears possessed talent enough to appreciate the value of the performance, sent the letter to the Society of Arts, &c. in the Adelphi: its contents were deservedly regarded by the members of the society as a subject worthy of their notice, and it was unanimously determined that the letter should be published in their Transactions; but the moment the first part of *Rights of Man* made its appearance, this deter-

Digitized by Google

mination was reversed, and the votaries and advocates of science became the voluntary tools of despotism. How thoroughly despicable must the minds of those men be, who could be gratified by such an act of pitiful meanness!

Mr. Paine had been at considerable expence in the erection of his bridge, which was principally defrayed by a Mr. Whiteside, an American merchant. Of our author's connections with this gentleman I have not been able to obtain any particulars which may be relied upon, but the probability is, that Mr. Paine had consigned over to him some of his property in America, and on the strength of this consideration had drawn upon him for money whenever he had wanted it. Be this as it may, it is certain that he had over-drawn his account to a considerable extent, and Whiteside becoming a bankrupt soon afterwards, the assignees arrested him for the balance. From this disagreeable situation he was in a short time released by the kindness of two American merchants, who agreed to become his bail, Mr. Paine paying down a considerable portion of the money, which by this time he had received from America, and giving his promissory note for the remainder.

The situation of France was by this period

Digitized by Google

become a matter of great interest to all Europe, and as Mr. Paine was, without doubt, in confidential intercourse with the chief authors of the great scenes which were taking place, he hastened over to Paris, that he might have the pleasure of witnessing the downfal of Bourbon despotism. The destruction of the Bastile, and the universal diffusion of republican principles throughout the French empire, had rendered that country a singular object of terror to the English government. The mass of the nation saw with pleasure the dawn of French liberty, while the majority of their rulers beheld it as a treasonable invasion of the divine rights of monarchy. They dreaded the spirit of enquiry which it was calculated to diffuse, and they feared that the Government of England, matchless and enviable as it was represented, would gain no credit by passing through the ordeal of national discussion. The first important attack that was made upon the principles of the French Revolution was by Mr. Burke at the opening of parliament, 1790. This was followed by an advertisement in several of the newspapers, stating that he intended shortly to publish his opinions on the subject in the form of a pamphlet. The friends of liberty in this country were astonished at the sudden

Digitized by Google

change in the politics of Mr. Burke, as he had, for several years previous, and particularly during the American war, been considered as a most eloquent and sincere advocate of public freedom. But it was shortly discovered that he had received a pension of £3000 a year, and this sufficiently explained the grounds of his apostacy. At the period of his parliamentary attack on the French Revolution, he corresponded with Mr. Paine, and so totally unexpected was his conduct, that the latter had written to him from Paris but a few weeks before, to inform him how prosperously matters were going on. When the advertisement was published announcing Mr. Burke's "Reflections," Mr. Paine promised the friends of the French revolution that he would answer the work whenever it appeared. He left France in November, 1790, having been an attentive observer, if not an active adviser, of the important proceedings which had taken place during the preceding twelve months. Mr. Burke's book appeared soon after his arrival. The popularity of the author as a literary character, the exertions of the government and its agents in all parts of the country, the flowery and impassioned language in which the historical and declamatory parts of the book were clothed,

Digitized by Google

and the reported delays which had retarded its appearance, and, consequently, increased the anxiety of the public, all conspired to give the work an interest, which its profligacy of principle and perversity of sentiment were insufficient to overcome. The mass of his readers were captivated by his eloquence, and but few took the trouble to reflect on the distorted facts, the real falsehoods, and the egregious absurdities with which the book abounded.

Mr. Paine lost no time in preparing his answer to the work. In less than three months he produced the first part of *Rights of Man*, in which he had combated and confuted the greater portion of Mr. Burke's doctrines. The work was printed in February, 1791, for Mr. Johnson, of St. Paul's Church Yard, but on looking it over he discovered some passages which he conceived were liable to be prosecuted, and he declined the publication. This refusal, which was altogether unexpected, occasioned a month's delay. After some difficulty, a publisher was at length found in Mr. Jordan, at No. 166, Fleet Street, and the work was brought out on the 13th of March, 1791.

This publication had a two-fold object in view;—firstly, that of rousing the attention of

Digitized by Google

the people of England to the defects and abuses of their own system of Government; and, secondly, that of refuting the falsehoods and exaggerations in Mr. Burke's "Reflections." Amongst other doctrines equally devoid of principle, Mr. Burke had published a commentary on the proceedings of the parliament of 1688, in which he had argued that the people of England were bound by the declaration of the said parliament, who had consented "to submit themselves, their heirs and posterities for ever," to the heirs and posterity of William and Mary. Mr. Paine argues, that whatever right the parliament might have to submit *themselves*, they had not, and could not, have any right to enter into any agreement or contract respecting the government of *posterity*, for, says he, "every age and generation must be as free to act for itself in *all cases*, as the age and generation which preceded it." A more self-evident position than this could not have been advanced, and the reflections naturally arising from it were quite sufficient to overturn the absurd conclusions which Mr. Burke had drawn from his omnipotent parliament of 1688.

Our author then proceeds to refute his misrepresentations relative to the French revolution,

Digitized by Google

and the causes of it. He enters into an elaborate detail of the events immediately preceding the overthrow of the ancient despotism, and of the consequences which it was calculated to produce. In speaking of the destruction of the Bastile, and of Mr. Burke's silence on the subject, he thus beautifully expresses himself. "Not one glance of compassion, not one commiserating reflection, that I can find throughout his book, has he bestowed on those who lingered out the most wretched of lives,—a life without hope in the most miserable of prisons. It is painful to behold a man employing his talents to corrupt himself. Nature has been kinder to Mr. Burke than he is to her. He is not affected by the reality of distress touching his heart, but by the shewy resemblance of it striking his imagination. He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird. Accustomed to kiss the aristocratic hand that hath purloined him from himself, he degenerates into a composition of art, and the genuine soul of nature forsakes him. His hero or his heroine must be a tragedy victim expiring in show, and not the real prisoner of misery sliding into death in the silence of a dungeon."—Mr. Paine reasons very deeply on the subject

Digitized by Google

of rights, and the origin of government, in opposition to the dogmatical assertions and high sounding declamation of his antagonist, and concludes his argument with a comparison between the constitutions of England and France, as the latter then stood under the authority of the national assembly. He ridicules the vanity of titles, and the policy of hereditary governors, and vindicates the conduct of the national assembly in abolishing the one, and neutralizing the authority of the other.

It has been urged against the work before us, that the author had neglected to arrange his matter methodically. But it should be recollected, that he was compelled to follow the track of his opponent, which, as Mr. Paine very truly observes, was a complete "wilderness of rhapsodies." It was therefore impossible to preserve that order which in any other work would be considered essentially requisite. It may, however, be safely asserted, that the author's meaning is always clear, that his facts are always correctly stated, and that his arguments are incontrovertible. With respect to the merits of the work as a composition, its immense circulation and immediate effect in exciting an enquiry into the abuses of the English

Digitized by Google

government, will answer for this part of the subject. Perhaps there never was a period in which the people of this country were less disposed to attend to the discussion of politics, than at the time Mr. Paine's pamphlet made its appearance:—they had been so often amused, and so often deceived by men who pretended to advocate their rights, that they were disgusted with the subject, and the apostacy of Mr. Burke was a confirmation of their sentiments. But the principles contained in the *Rights of Man* opened an entirely new field of argument and inquiry, and the thinking part of the people began to view the right of political reform, not as a boon to be expected or desired from the government, but as a power which the nation alone had the authority to exercise.

About the middle of May, Mr. Paine again went to France. Soon after his arrival, the King fled from Paris. On this occasion he observed to his friend Mr. Christie, "You see the absurdity of monarchical governments. Here will be a whole nation disturbed by the folly of one man." When the King returned to Paris, Mr. Paine was from an accidental circumstance in considerable danger of losing his life. An immense concourse of persons of all classes, had assem-

Digitized by Google

bled to witness the event. Amongst the crowd was Mr. Paine. An officer proclaimed the order of the national assembly that all should be silent and covered. In an instant all hats were on. Mr. Paine, however, had lost his cockade, the emblem of liberty and equality. The multitude observing that he remained uncovered, supposed that he was one of their enemies, and a cry instantly arose, "*Aristocrat! Aristocrat! a la lanterne! a la lanterne!*" He was desired by those who stood near him to put on his hat, and it was some time before the people could be satisfied by explanation.

The Abbe Syeyes, who had been one of the principal authors of the new constitution, being alarmed at the partial excesses which had been committed by the populace, and falsely attributing them to the propagation of republican principles, avowed his intention of defending the monarchical against the democratical system of government. Mr. Paine readily accepted the challenge, and offered, in the short space of fifty pages, to controvert all the arguments which the Abbe could bring forward in defence of his proposition. The latter prudently declined the contest, and thus the matter ended.

On the 13th July, 1791, he returned to London,

Digitized by Google

but it was not thought prudent that he should attend the public celebration of the French revolution, which was to take place on the following day. He was, however, present at the meeting which was held at the Thatched House Tavern, on the 20th of August following. Of the Address and Declaration which issued from this meeting, and which was at first attributed to Mr. Horne Tooke, Mr. Paine was the author.* A second meeting was intended to have been held at the same place, for a similar purpose, but the proprietor of the tavern was so much alarmed at the clamours of the government party, that he was under the necessity of informing Mr. Horne Tooke and his friends that he could not receive them.

Mr. Paine was now very much engaged in preparing the second part of the *Rights of Man* for the press. In the meantime the ministry had received information that the work would shortly appear, and they resolved on getting it suppressed if possible. Having ascertained the name of the printer, they employed† him to endeavour to purchase the

* See the Appendix.

† I am aware that the circumstance of Mr. Chapman's being employed by government, has been denied by the partizans of

Digitized by Google

copyright of the second, together with the future copyright of the first part of the *Rights of Man*. He began first by offering an hundred guineas, then five hundred, and at length a thousand; but Mr. Paine told him, that "he would never put it in the power of any printer or publisher to suppress or alter a work of his, by making him master of the copy, or give him the right of selling it to any minister, or to any other person, or to treat as a mere matter of traffic that which he intended should operate as a principle."

Finding that Mr. Paine was not to be bribed by pecuniary offers, the ministry next attempted to impede, since they could not suppress, the publication of the work, and in this they par-

---

the administration. But from the evidence which he gave on the trial there is every reason to conclude that he was commissioned by the ministry, or their immediate agents. He there states, that he refused to go on with the printing of the work from the fear of its being prosecuted. Is it probable that any man would be so extremely foolish as to offer a thousand guineas for the copyright of a book which he dare not sell, unless he had some prospect in doing it distinct from the profit that was to be derived from the publication? The case is too clear to require further commentary.

Digitized by Google

tially succeeded. Amongst other things, it contained several propositions relative to a reduction of the public taxes. It was intended to have appeared on the day of the meeting of parliament, but when the printer found it was not to be purchased, he suddenly stopped in the middle of the work, and informed Mr. Paine that he would not proceed with the remainder on any consideration. Another printer, therefore, became necessary, and this occasioned a delay of a fortnight. From the circumstances stated in the Appendix, there is every reason to conclude that the proof sheets were regularly sent to the Cabinet, and that the small addition to the pay of the soldiers, as well as several proposals for reducing the taxes brought forward by Mr. Pitt at the opening of parliament, were done for no other object than that of making it appear that Mr. Paine's plan was merely an improvement on that of the minister. But even in this paltry purpose the parties in power were defeated, by the exposure of the circumstances in the Appendix to the work.

The *Rights of Man*, part the second, combining principle and practice, was published by Mr. Jordan, of Fleet Street, on the 16th of February, 1792. Exclusive of a dedication to

Digitized by Google

M. de la Fayette, a preface, and an introduction, it is divided into five chapters:—Chap. I. On Society and Civilization;—II. On the Origin of the present Old Governments;—III. On the Old and New Systems of Government;—IV. On Constitutions;—V. Ways and Means of reforming the political Condition of Europe, interspersed with miscellaneous observations.

The second part is, strictly speaking, a continuation of the first. The general design of the work appears to have been an investigation of the abuses of the English government, an examination of the hereditary and representative systems, to which are added a variety of propositions for meliorating the condition of the nation. In going over this work, it is difficult to decide whether the ability or benevolence of the writer is the most deserving of our admiration. The most abstruse and difficult subjects in the science of politics are rendered intelligible and interesting, and the abuses which had been accumulating for ages, and which antiquity seemed to have rendered sacred and venerable, are examined with a degree of boldness, which is wholly without precedent or parallel. The generality of those who had previously written on the subject of government, appear to have

Digitized by Google

drawn their principles from existing systems, and all that they had attempted to effect, was the correction of a few exterior abuses, without daring to invade the assumed rights of the establishment itself. But our author's attack, was quite of a different nature: he not only deprecated the practice, but he condemned the principle. He not only declared his contempt for the monarch, but his detestation of the monarchy. He had studied the science of politics in the school of human nature, and he spoke as he felt, without reverencing, or even referring to the subtleties of the sophists who had gone before him.

One of the great objects of the work was to do away with the delusive notion, that the members of the system ought to be expected to reform themselves. "There does not," says he, "exist within such governments, sufficient stamina whereon to engraft reformation."—"The right of reform is in the nation, in its original character, and the constitutional method would be by a general convention elected for the purpose." He likewise reasons with much energy in the first as well as the second part of the work against the prevalent opinions, with respect to the mixed system of govern-

Digitized by Google

ment.—"A nation is not a body, the figure of which is to be represented by the human body, but is like a body contained within a circle, having a common centre in which every radius meets, and that centre is formed by representation. To connect representation with what is called monarchy, is eccentric government. Representation is of itself the delegated monarchy of a nation, and cannot debase itself by dividing it with another." Indeed it requires very little reflection to discover the impossibility of uniting democracy with monarchy or aristocracy, for any beneficial purpose. The union may exist in appearance, but it never can take place in fact. The dignified pride of republicanism disowns the base connection.

It is impossible to form an exact estimate of the number of copies which were circulated of the first and second parts of the *Rights of Man*, but at a very moderate calculation there was at least an hundred thousand of each. When Mr. Paine saw the great interest which it excited, he thought the best mode of promulgating its principles, would be to give up the copyright in favour of the public, which he did, about two months after the appearance of the second part. The probability of a revolution

Digitized by Google

now became a subject of general discussion. The nation was divided into two numerous and powerful classes, the one consisting of the ignorant and the majority of the wealthy, arranged under the banners of civil and religious tyranny, and declaring their attachment to all that was superstitious in the church, and all that was despotic in the state,—while the other, more numerous and less dependent, more enlightened though less opulent, being convinced that the government in its existing state was the cause of the greater part of the misery with which the country was afflicted, were determined to let slip no opportunity of shaking off the load of oppression. That the different branches of government were in a state of the completest trepidation, is a fact that admits of no question, and that many of the most intelligent men of all parties expected a revolution, is equally indisputable.—It is recorded of a certain ancient philosopher, who lived under a capricious tyrant, that he used every morning, when he awoke, to feel whether his head was on his shoulders; and the state of the English people at length became so unsettled, and the stability of the government so problematical,

Digitized by Google

that the King and his ministry might almost consider themselves in as precarious a situation.

On the first appearance of the *Rights of Man*, the ministry saw that it inculcated truths which they could not controvert, that it contained plans which, if adopted, would benefit at least nine tenths of the community, and that its principles were the reverse of the existing system of government; they therefore judged that the most politic method would be to treat the work with contempt, to represent it as a foolish and insignificant performance, unworthy of their notice, and undeserving of the attention of the public. But they soon found the inefficacy of this mode of treatment; the more contempt they shewed, the more the book was read and approved of. Finding, therefore, that their declarations of contempt were as unsuccessful as their project of buying up the work, they determined upon prosecuting the author and publisher. Mr. Paine was not at all surprised at this resolution of the ministry; indeed, he had anticipated it on the publication of the second part of the work, and to remove any doubt as to his intention of defending the principles which he had so effectually inculcated,

Digitized by Google

he addressed the following letter to his publisher.

Feb. 16, 1792.

"SIR,

"SHOULD any person, under the sanction of any kind of authority, enquire of you respecting the author and publisher of the *Rights of Man*, you will please to mention me as the author and publisher of that work, and shew to such person this letter. I will as soon as I am made acquainted with it, appear and answer for the work personally.

"Your humble servant,

"THOMAS PAINE."

"Mr. Jordan,
No. 166, Fleet-street."

The first intimation which Mr. Paine received of the intentions of the ministry, was on the 14th of May, 1792. He was then at Bromley in Kent, upon which he came immediately to town; on his arrival, he found that Mr. Jordan had that evening been served with a summons to appear at the Court of King's Bench on the Monday following, but for what purpose was not stated. Conceiving it to be on account of

Digitized by Google

the work, he appointed a meeting with Mr. Jordan on the next morning, when he provided a solicitor, and took the expense of the defence on himself. But Mr. Jordan, it appears, had too much regard for his person to hazard its safety on the event of a prosecution, and he compromised the affair with the solicitor of the treasury, by agreeing to appear in Court and plead guilty. This arrangement answered the purpose of both parties,—that of Jordan in liberating him from the risk of a prosecution, and that of the ministry, since his plea of guilty amounted in some measure to a condemnation of the work.

The following letter from Mr. Paine to Sir Archibald Macdonald, the then Attorney-General, will serve to confirm this statement:—

"SIR,

"THOUGH I have some reason for believing that you were not the original promoter or encourager of the prosecution commenced against the work entitled '*Rights of Man*,' either as that prosecution is intended to affect the author, the publisher, or the public; yet as you appear the official person therein, I address this letter to

Digitized by Google

you, not as Sir Archibald Macdonald, but as attorney-general.

"You began by a prosecution against the publisher, Jordan, and the reason assigned by Mr. Secretary Dundas, in the House of Commons, in the debate on the proclamation, May 25, for taking that measure, was, he said, because Mr. Paine could not be found, or words to that effect. Mr. Paine, Sir, so far from secreting himself, never went a step out of his way, nor in the least instance varied from his usual conduct, to avoid any measure you might choose to adopt with respect to him. It is on the purity of his heart, and the universal utility of the principles and plans which his writings contain, that he rests the issue; and he will not dishonour it by any kind of subterfuge. The apartments which he occupied at the time of writing the work last winter, he has continued to occupy to the present hour, and the solicitors of the prosecution knew where to find him; of which there is a proof in their own office as far back as the 21st of May, and also in the office of my own attorney.

"But admitting, for the sake of the case, that the reason for proceeding against the pub-

Digitized by Google

lisher was, as Mr. Dundas stated, that Mr. Paine could not be found, that reason can now exist no longer.

"The instant that I was informed that an information was preparing to be filed against me, as the author of, I believe, one of the most useful and benevolent books ever offered to mankind, I directed my attorney to put in an appearance; and as I shall meet the prosecution fully and fairly, and with a good and upright conscience, I have a right to expect that no act of littleness will be made use of on the part of the prosecution towards influencing the future issue with respect to the author. This expression may, perhaps, appear obscure to you, but I am in the possession of some matters which serve to shew that the action against the publisher is not intended to be a *real* action. If, therefore, any persons concerned in the prosecution have found their cause so weak as to make it appear convenient to them to enter into a negociation with the publisher, whether for the purpose of his submitting to a verdict, and to make use of the verdict so obtained as a circumstance, by way of precedent, on a future trial against myself; or for any other

Digitized by Google

purpose not fully made known to me; if, I say, I have cause to suspect this to be the case, I shall most certainly withdraw the defence I should otherwise have made, or promoted, on his (the publisher's) behalf, and leave the negociators to themselves, and shall reserve the whole of the defence for the *real* trial.

"But, Sir, for the purpose of conducting this matter with at least that appearance of fairness and openness that shall justify itself before the public, whose cause it really is (for it is the right of public discussion and investigation that is questioned), I have to propose to you to cease the prosecution against the publisher; and as the reason or pretext can no longer exist for continuing it against him because Mr. Paine could not be found, that you would direct the whole process against me, with whom the prosecuting party will not find it possible to enter into any private negociation.

"I will do the cause full justice, as well for the sake of the nation, as for my own reputation.

"Another reason for discontinuing the process against the publisher is, because it can amount to nothing. First, because a jury in London

Digitized by Google

cannot decide upon the fact of publishing beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of London, and therefore the work may be republished over and over again in every county in the nation, and every case must have a separate process; and by the time that three or four hundred prosecutions have been had, the eyes of the nation will then be fully open to see that the work in question contains a plan the best calculated to root out all the abuses of government, and to lessen the taxes of the nation upwards of *six millions annually*.

"Secondly, because though the gentlemen of London may be very expert in understanding their particular professions and occupations, and how to make business contracts with government beneficial to themselves as individuals, the rest of the nation may not be disposed to consider them sufficiently qualified nor authorised to determine for the whole nation on plans of reform, and on systems and principles of government. This would be in effect to erect a jury into a national convention, instead of electing a convention, and to lay a precedent for the probable tyranny of juries, under the pretence of supporting their rights.

Digitized by Google

"That the possibility always exists of packing juries will not be denied; and, therefore, in all cases, where government is the prosecutor, more especially in those where the right of public discussion and investigation of principles and systems of government is attempted to be suppressed by a verdict, or in those where the object of the work that is prosecuted is the reform of abuse and the abolition of sinecure places and pensions, in all these cases the verdict of a jury will itself become a subject of discussion; and, therefore, it furnishes an additional reason for discontinuing the prosecution against the publisher, more especially as it is not a secret that there has been a negociation with him for secret purposes, and for proceeding against me only. I shall make a much stronger defence than what I believe the Treasury Solicitor's agreement with him will permit him to do.

"I believe that Mr. Burke, finding himself defeated, and not being able to make any answer to the *Rights of Man*, has been one of the promoters of this prosecution; and I shall return the compliment to him by shewing, in a future publication, that he has been a masked

Digitized by Google

pensioner at £1500 per annum for about ten years.

"Thus it is that the public money is wasted, and the dread of public investigation is produced.

"I am, SIR,

"Your obedient humble Servant,

"THOMAS PAINE."

"To Sir A. MACDONALD,
Attorney-General."

The business being thus settled with respect to Jordan, and he consenting to give up the documents in his possession relative to the *Rights of Man*, in order to facilitate their means of proceeding against the author, they commenced their prosecution against the latter on the 21st of May. On the same day they issued their celebrated proclamation against what they were pleased to term "seditious writings." The authors of this document, preserved a careful silence as to the specific object of their alarms, but it was easy to discover that their intention was to cry down the *Rights of Man*, and to influence the verdict of the jury which was to try the author. Another

Digitized by Google

expedient was likewise resorted to,—that of procuring addresses in favour of the existing system of government from the corporations, rotten boroughs, and other places under the influence of the ministry. Nothing could be more despicable than these addresses,* and

---

* As a contrast to these contemptible and fulsome specimens of servility, I subjoin the following:

"At a Meeting of the Manchester Constitutional Society, held this day, it was unanimously resolved,

"That the thanks of this Society are due to Mr. Thomas Paine, for the publication of his "Second Part of the Rights of Man, combining Principle and Practice," a work of the highest importance to every nation under heaven; but particularly to this, as containing excellent and practical plans for an immediate and considerable reduction of the public expenditure; for the prevention of wars; for the extension of our manufactures and commerce; for the education of the young, for the comfortable support of the aged; for the better maintenance of the poor of every description; and, finally, for lessening greatly, and without delay, the enormous load of taxes under which this country at present labours.

"That this Society congratulate their countrymen at large, on the influence which Mr. Paine's publications appear to have had, in procuring the repeal of some oppressive taxes in the present session of Parliament; and they hope that this adoption of a small part of Mr. Paine's ideas, *will be followed by the most strenuous exertions to accomplish a complete reform in the present inadequate state of the representation*

Digitized by Google

nothing more glaring than the conduct of their promoters, who were chiefly persons directly or indirectly interested in the support of public abuses: but despicable as they were, they served in some measure the purpose of the moment in decrying the character of a work, and de-

---

of the people, and that the other great plans of public benefit, which Mr. Paine has so powerfully recommended, will be speedily carried into effect.

"THOMAS WALKER, President.
March 13, 1792. "SAMUEL JACKSON, Secretary."

Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information.

"This Society, composed chiefly of the manufacturers of Sheffield, began about four months ago, and is already increased to nearly *two thousand* members, and is daily increasing, exclusive of the adjacent towns and villages who are forming themselves into similar societies.

"Considering, as we do, that the want of knowledge and information in the general mass of the people, has exposed them to numberless impositions and abuses, the exertions of this Society are directed to the acquirement of useful knowledge, and to spread the same as far as our endeavours and abilities can extend.

"We declare that we have derived more true knowledge from the two works of Mr. THOMAS PAINE, entitled *Rights of Man*, Part the First and Second, than from any author on the subject. The practice as well as the principle of government is laid down, in those works, in a manner so clear and

Digitized by Google

fanning the reputation of a man whose arguments were unanswerable, and whose character was irreproachable. A great number of pamphlets, intended as answers to the *Rights of Man*, had issued from the press, but such was the irresistible nature of truth, that these

---

irresistibly convincing, that this Society do hereby resolve to give their thanks to Mr. Paine for his two said publications, entitled Rights of Man, Part 1st and 2d. Also,

"Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Society be given to Mr. Paine, for the affectionate concern he has shewn in his second work in behalf of the poor, the infant, and the aged; who, notwithstanding the opulence which blesses other parts of the community, are by the grievous weight of taxes, rendered the miserable victims of poverty and wretchedness.

"Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Society be given to JOHN HORNE TOOKE, Esq. for his meritorious support of our lawful privileges, as a firm advocate of our natural and just rights, the establishment of an equal representation of the people.

"Resolved unanimously, That this Society disdaining to be considered either of a ministerial or opposition party (names of which we are tired, having been so often deceived by both) do ardently recommend it to all their fellow-citizens, into whose hands these resolutions may come, to confer seriously and calmly with each other on the subject alluded to; and to manifest to the world, that the spirit of true liberty is a spirit of order; and that to obtain justice it is consistent that we be just to ourselves.

Digitized by Google

puny and feeble efforts on the part of wounded corruption no sooner appeared than they vanished, and a few short weeks consigned them and their authors to eternal oblivion. They therefore determined that an appeal to popular clamour would serve their cause better than an appeal to reason, and the verdict of a packed jury would answer their purpose better than any attempt to argue the merits of the work on the principles of truth and justice.

While the ministers of despotism were thus revelling in the anticipation of their plots and

---

"Resolved unanimously, That these Resolutions be printed, and that a copy thereof be transmitted to the Society for Constitutional Information, London, requesting their approbation for twelve of our friends to be entered into their society for the purpose of establishing a connection and a regular communication with that and all other similar societies in the kingdom.

"By Order of the Committee,

March 14, 1792. "DAVID MARTIN, Chairman."

The above are selected from a number of others of a similar description. They shew that Mr. Paine had the approbation of the most independent portion of the people, though his writings were not sanctioned by the aristocracy, the landed interest, or any other class interested in the protection of a corrupt system of government.

Digitized by Google

schemes for crushing the rising spirit of the country, the author of the *Rights of Man* was resolved not to shrink from the discussion which his writings had occasioned. He was urged by several gentlemen of the law to prefer a bill of indictment against the publisher of the proclamation, as a publication tending to influence the decision of the jury; but conscious of the rectitude of his intentions, and of the strength of his arguments, he preferred meeting the proclamation on its own ground, and defending the principles of the work which had been falsely stigmatized as wicked and seditious. Accordingly about the month of August, 1792, he prepared another publication in defence of the *Rights of Man* and of his own conduct, entitled "*An Address to the Addressers on the late Proclamation.*" This is one of the severest pieces of satire that ever issued from the press. The parliamentary orators on both sides the House, anxious to raise a popular outcry against the *Rights of Man*, had commenced the Session, by describing to the country and to each other blessings which were enjoyed under the British Constitution. The praises which were bestowed upon the "radical beauties" of this constitution, and the motives which produced

Digitized by Google

them, are ridiculed by Mr. Paine in a fine strain of irony. Having informed the *addressers* of these symptoms of alarm, on the part of their mild and merciful governors, he proceeds to a defence of the principles of the *Rights of Man.* He repeats his former arguments, and offers additional reasons for the positions he had advanced. He concludes this part of the pamphlet with these words, in reference to the impending prosecution:—"If to expose the fraud and imposition of every species of hereditary government,—to lessen the oppression of taxes,—to propose plans for the education of helpless infancy, and the comfortable support of the aged and distressed,—to endeavour to conciliate nations to each other,—to extirpate the horrid practice of war,—to promote universal peace, civilization, and commerce,—and to break the chains of political superstition, and raise degraded man to his proper rank;—if these things be libellous, let me live the life of a libeller, and let the name of LIBELLER be engraven on my tomb!"

But though Mr. Paine was determined to take every opportunity of defending his principles, he maintained that the case was deserving of a much more extensive consideration than

Digitized by Google

could be bestowed upon it by any jury, whether special or common. He contends in the work before us, that the question was not so much whether he had or had not written what crown lawyers and packed juries are in the habit of condemning as wicked and seditious libels, but whether individuals had the right to investigate systems and principles of government, and to publish the conclusions resulting from such investigation. It was *this* right which the ministry were invading under the pretence of prosecuting the author of the *Rights of Man*, and while in appearance they were merely attempting to suppress what they called the seditious writings of Mr. Paine, they were, in fact, aiming a deadly blow at the rights of every man in the country.

It was at first Mr. Paine's intention to have defended himself personally, but an event happened about two months previous to the trial which disconcerted his purpose. While he was preparing his "*Letter to the Addressers*," his friends and admirers in France were preparing a wreath of civic honours, as a reward for his intrepid exertions in defence of universal liberty. About the middle of September, 1792, a French deputation announced to him

Digitized by Google

in London, that the department of Calais had elected him as their representative in the National Convention. This was a matter of greater interest to him than the Attorney-General's prosecution, and he proceeded to Dover with the intention of embarking immediately to Calais. The treatment which he met with at Dover was disgraceful in the extreme*, his trunks were all opened, and the contents examined. Some of his papers were seized, and, it is probable, that the whole would have shared the same fate, but for the cool and steady conduct of Mr. Paine and his attendants. When the custom-house officers had indulged themselves in this manner as long as they thought proper, Mr. Paine, and his friends, were suffered to embark, and they arrived at Calais, after a pleasant passage of three hours. He very narrowly escaped the vigilance of the despots he had provoked, for it appears that an order to detain him was received at Dover, in about twenty minutes after his embarkation. The reception which he met with at Calais,

* For a full account of this scandalous transaction, see his Second Letter to Mr. Secretary Dundas, dated Calais, Sept. 15, 1792.

Digitized by Google

furnished a striking contrast to the conduct of the government agents at Dover. On the name of PAINE being announced, the soldiers at the gates were drawn up, and the officers on guard having embraced him, presented him with the national cockade. A very pretty woman, who was standing by, desired she might have the honour of putting it in his hat, expressing her hopes that he would continue his exertions in favour of Liberty, Equality, and France. A salute was then fired from the battery, to announce the arrival of their new representative. This ceremony being over, he walked to Deisseín's, in the *Rue de l'Egalité* (formerly *Rue de Roi*), the men, women, and children crowding around him, and calling out "*Vive* THOMAS PAINE!" He was then conducted to the Town-hall, and there presented to the Municipality, who with the greatest affection embraced their Representative. The Mayor addressed him in a short speech, which was interpreted to him by his friend and conductor, M. Audibert, to which Mr. Paine, laying his hand on his heart, replied, that his life should be devoted to their service.

At the inn he was waited upon by the different persons in authority, and by the President

Digitized by Google

of the Constitutional Society, who desired he would attend their meeting of that night: he cheerfully complied with the request, and the whole town would have been there, had there been room: the hall of the '*Minimes*' was so crowded that it was with the greatest difficulty they made way for Mr. Paine to the side of the President. Over the chair he sat in was placed the bust of Mirabeau, and the colours of France, England, and America united. A speaker acquainted him from the tribune with his election, amidst the plaudits of the people. For some minutes after this ceremony, nothing was heard but "*Vive la Nation! Vive* THOMAS PAINE," in voices male and female.

On the following day an extra meeting was appointed to be held in the church in honour of their new Deputy to the Convention, the *Minimes* being found quite suffocating from the vast concourse of people which had assembled on the previous occasion. A play was performed at the Theatre on the evening after his arrival, and a box was specifically reserved "for the Author of the '*Rights of Man*,' the object of the English Proclamation."

Mr. Paine was likewise elected as deputy for Abbeville, Beauvais, and Versailles, as well

Digitized by Google

as for the department of Calais, but the latter having been the first in their choice, he preferred being their representative.

After remaining with his constituents a short time, he proceeded to Paris in order to take his seat as a member of the National Assembly. On the road he met with similar honours to those which he had received at Calais. As soon as he had arrived at Paris, he addressed a Letter to the People of France, thanking his fellow-citizens for adopting him as their deputy to the Convention.

Mr. Paine was, shortly after his arrival in Paris, appointed a member of the Committee for framing the new Constitution. While he was peaceably and patriotically performing the duties of his station, the ministry of this country were using every effort to counteract the (to them) dangerous principles which he had disseminated. For this purpose they filed a number of informations against the different individuals who had retailed the work. The trial of Mr. Paine came on at Guildhall, on the 18th of December, before Lord Kenyon,* and

* This man was one of the most cruel, vindictive, and merciless characters that ever disgraced the bench of a British

Digitized by Google

a special jury. The former being pensioned, and the latter being packed, a verdict of guilty followed as a matter of course. The proceedings on this trial are not of much interest, except as they tend to develope the inquisitorial character of an English Court of Law in matters of libel. The Attorney-General had selected a few passages from the Second Part of

---

Court of Justice. As an illustration of his conduct, the following anecdote will be sufficient: in the year 1799, a gentleman with whom I have the pleasure of being acquainted, of the name of WADDINGTON, speculated very largely in *hops*. It is the custom, and has been so time out of mind, to purchase many of the hops of the growers before they are gathered, and to give so much a pound for them when gathered and put into bags. Mr. Waddington, (who was an opulent banker, and whose character, as a commercial man, stood very high,) about the time he was making large purchases of this sort, took the lead in calling a meeting in the city of London to petition against the war. The myrmidons of Pitt were set to work to discover how he might be annoyed. They trumped up a charge of forestalling against him for having purchased hops before they were brought to market. Nothing could be more unfounded than this charge, seeing that it had been the practice of thousands of persons for perhaps more than a century. In the reigns of Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, Charles II., and Anne, divers Acts of Parliament had been passed against forestalling, regrating, en-

Digitized by Google

the *Rights of Man*, which he thought were most likely to answer his purpose, and these, in the verbose vulgarity of the law, he stigmatized as false, wicked, scandalous, and seditious. He was prudent enough to refrain from any attempt to *prove* the truth of his charge, well knowing that with such a Judge, and such a Jury, abuse would be received as a substitute

---

grossing, &c. But in time it was discovered that these acts were not only foolish, but mischievous, and in the 12th year of the reign of the present King, the whole of them were repealed, upon the ground that they tended to produce *dearth* and *misery*. But the *Common Law* had not been repealed, or at least Kenyon *said so*. Upon this was Mr. Waddington indicted, and a jury, packed for the purpose, found him guilty of dealings as honest and common as any in the country: in consequence of this verdict, the wicked and malignant judge sentenced this worthy and respectable man to be imprisoned as well as fined, which, considering that it dissolved all his contracts, produced a forfeiture of his deposits, and caused a run upon his house, and his bank was, in fact, sentencing him to ruin, and almost to actual beggary. The result of these proceedings brought forth a number of informations against forestallers—fortunately for Kenyon he died soon after, and his successor declared that *not* to be an offence, which Kenyon had declared *to be*, an offence for the sole purpose of ruining a man whom Pitt and his colleagues had marked out for destruction.

Digitized by Google

for argument, and the coarsest and most improbable calumnies would be admitted as evidence of the writer's evil intention. The greater part of his speech to the jury was taken up with a comment on a letter relative to the prosecution, which Mr. Paine had written to him from Paris. In this letter he says, "had not my duty as a Member of the National Convention of France called me from England, I should have staid to have contested the injustice of that prosecution; not upon my own account, for I cared not about the prosecution, but to have defended the principles I had advanced in the work." He likewise delivers his opinion, very freely, upon the capacity of the reigning king, and the profligacy of his sons, and very pointedly asks the Attorney-General, whether he conceives such persons are necessary to the government of a nation? Mr. Erskine contended against the legal right of the prosecutor to avail himself of the contents of this letter, but the Judge overruled the objection. Indeed the whole of the proceedings seem to have been marked out beforehand, and the trial seems to have been nothing but a convenient farce. Mr. Erskine addressed the Jury for some hours, but his speech was rather an

Digitized by Google

evasion of the charge, than a justification of the principles he professed to defend. It was, as Mr. Paine observed, on seeing the report of the trial, "a good speech for himself, but a very poor defence of the '*Rights of Man*'." The Jury found a verdict for the crown, without the trouble of deliberation.

With respect to the different retailers of the work against whom informations were filed, their fate now became pretty evident. The ministry were not satisfied with punishing the vendors of the *Rights of Man;* they likewise instituted prosecutions against the publishers of the *Letter to the Addressers*, and obtained several convictions. The following statement contains, I believe, a correct account of the number of prosecutions against these works:

A List of the Persons who have been prosecuted for the publication of Paine's Works.

December 18th, 1792. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man, Part II. convicted; went to France previous to the trial.

February 26, 1793. Thomas Spence, Rights of Man, Part II. flaw in the indictment; acquitted.

William Holland. Address to the Addressers, one year's imprisonment, and £100 fine.

Digitized by Google

H. D. Symonds. Rights of Man, two years imprisonment, and £20 fine.--Letter to the Addressers, one year's imprisonment, £100 fine, and two sureties of £250 each, and self for £500, for three years, and imprisonment till the fine be paid and sureties given.

April 15. — Thompson, printer, Birmingham, Rights of Man, and Address to the Addressers; acquitted.

April 17. Richard Phillips, printer, Leicester, Rights of Man; eighteen months imprisonment.

May 8. J. Ridgway, bookseller, London; Rights of Man, one year's imprisonment, and £100 fine.—Letter to the Addressers, one year's imprisonment, and £100 fine; in each case, two sureties of £250 each, and self for £500 for three years, and imprisonment till the fine be paid, and sureties given.

June 3. D. I. Eaton, Rights of Man; verdict which amounted to an acquittal.—July 11. Do. Address to the Addressers; do.

Richard Peart and William Belcher, Address to the Addressers, and Rights of Man; imprisonment three months.

August 10. Messrs. Robinsons, Rights of Man; fine.

Daniel Holt, Bookseller, Newark, Address to the Addressers; four years imprisonment, and £50 fine.

These prosecutions, though they were far from tranquillizing or satisfying the public

Digitized by Google

mind, were certainly followed by one of their intended effects, that of suppressing the circulation of the work. Such was the acrimony with which the admirers of Mr. Paine were persecuted in all parts of the country, that it was regarded as highly dangerous for any person to be found with the book in his possession; for though the law took no cognizance of such an act, the individual became a marked object of destruction, and so vigilant were the agents of tyranny, that their malice was sure to be gratified by one means or other. On the trials of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall, the circumstance of their having patronized the *Rights of Man* was made a very material ground for the charge of High Treason, and though the accusation failed, the obloquy, which by this and other means was cast upon the work, tended very greatly to prevent its further dissemination.

To return to Mr. Paine and the French Convention. On the 25th of July, 1792, the Duke of Brunswick issued his sanguinary manifesto: in this he stated that the allies were resolved to inflict the most dreadful punishments on the National Assembly, and on the city of Paris, for their treatment of the Royal Family; he even

Digitized by Google

went so far as to threaten to give up the place to military execution. The publication of this document threw the people of Paris into a state of complete confusion. They became frantic and furious, and the manifesto, instead of lulling them into repose, drove them to deeds of desperation. A party was soon formed in the Convention for putting the King to death, and the agitated condition of the people facilitated the design. Mr. Paine laboured hard to prevent this object from being carried into execution, but though his efforts produced a few converts to his doctrine, the majority of his colleagues were too enraged with the duplicity of the King, and the detestable conduct of the foreign monarchs, with whom he was leagued, to listen to any thing short of the most unlimited vengeance. The conduct of Louis was too reprehensible to be passed over in silence; Mr. Paine therefore voted that he should be tried*, but when the question whether he should be condemned to death, was brought forward, he opposed it by every argument in his power. His exertions were, however, inef-

* See his Letter and Opinion on this subject in the Appendix.

Digitized by Google

fectual, and sentence of death was passed, though by a very small majority. Mr. Paine was determined to let slip no opportunity of protesting against this measure, and when the question, whether the sentence should be carried into execution, was discussed, he combated the proposition with great energy. (As he was not in the habit of pronouncing French, one of the secretaries read his discourse translated from the original English. It is evident that his reasoning was thought very persuasive, since those who had heard the discourses of Buzot, Condorcet, and Brissot, to the same purpose without interruption, broke out in murmurs while Paine's opinion was reading; and Marat, at length, losing all patience, exclaimed that Paine was a Quaker, and insinuated that his mind being contracted by the narrow principles of his religion, was incapable of the liberality that was requisite for condemning men to death.) This shrewd argument not being thought convincing, the secretary continued to read, "That the execution of the sentence, instead of an act of justice, would appear to all the world, and particularly to their allies, the American States, as an act of vengeance, and that if he were sufficiently master of the French

Digitized by Google

language, he would, in the name of his brethren of America, present a petition at their bar against the execution of the sentence."—Marat and his associates said that these could not possibly be the sentiments of Thomas Paine, and that the assembly was imposed on by a false translation. On comparing it with the original, however, it was found correct.

Though these exertions were frustrated, they were attended with one effect, that of rendering Mr. Paine an object of hatred amongst the most violent actors in the revolution. They found that he could not be induced to participate in their acts of cruelty; they dreaded the opposition which he might make to these sanguinary deeds, and they therefore marked him out as a victim to be sacrificed the first opportunity.

The humanity of Mr. Paine was, indeed, one of the most prominent features in his character, and it was equally a matter of indifference to him whether the exercise of this high attribute of the human heart was required on a trivial or important, a public or private occasion. Of his strict attention to his public duty in this respect, even at the hazard of his own safety, we have a convincing proof in his opposition to the

Digitized by Google

execution of the King, and of his humane and charitable disposition in a private point of view, the following circumstances are sufficient to warrant the most unqualified conclusion.

Mr. Paine happened to be dining one day with about twenty friends at a Coffee House in the *Palais Egalité*, now the *Palais Royal*, when unfortunately for the harmony of the company, a Captain in the English service contrived to introduce himself as one of the party. The military gentleman was a strenuous supporter of the constitution in church and state, and a decided enemy of the French Revolution. After the cloth was drawn, the conversation chiefly turned on the state of affairs in England, and the means which had been adopted by the government to check the increase of political knowledge. Mr. Paine delivered his opinion very freely, and much to the satisfaction of every one present, with the exception of Captain Grimstone, who returned his arguments by calling him a traitor to his country, with a variety of terms equally opprobious. Mr. Paine treated his abuse with much good humour, which rendered the Captain so furious, that he walked up to the part of the room where Mr. Paine was sitting, and struck him a violent blow, which nearly knocked

Digitized by Google

him off his seat. The cowardice of this behaviour from a stout young man towards a person of Mr. Paine's age (he being then upwards of sixty) is not the least disgraceful part of the transaction. There was, however, no time for reflections of this sort; an alarm was instantly given, that the Captain had struck a Citizen Deputy of the Convention, which was considered an insult to the nation at large; the offender was hurried into custody, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Paine prevented him from being executed on the spot.

It ought to be observed, that an act of the Convention had awarded the punishment of death to any one who should be convicted of striking a deputy: Mr. Paine was therefore placed in a very unpleasant situation. He immediately applied to Barrere, at that time President of the Committee of Public Safety, for a passport for his imprudent adversary, who after much hesitation complied with his request. It likewise occasioned Mr. Paine considerable personal inconvenience to procure his liberation; but even this was not sufficient; the Captain was without friends, and pennyless, and Mr. Paine generously supplied him with money to defray his travelling expences.

Digitized by Google

The gentleman who favoured me with the account of the foregoing circumstance, has likewise informed me of another anecdote equally honourable to Mr. Paine's feelings. A Major Munro, who at the beginning of the Revolution was employed by Mr. Pitt to send an account to the ministry of what was going on in Paris, remained there till after the declaration of war, when he, with many others, were sent to prison. He had previously occupied the same hotel with Mr. Paine, and though the latter was aware of his errand, he found him an intelligent companion. When the Major was imprisoned, he applied to Mr. Paine, who after considerable trouble obtained his release. The Major is living now, and it is but fair to say, that he has often observed to his friends, that he should ever feel indebted to the kindness of Mr. Paine, for the interest he employed in procuring his discharge.

I have already noticed the feeling of hostility with which our author's exertions in the cause of humanity were received by some of the members of the Convention. Those who had deserted the principles of liberty, and who from the most treacherous and tyrannical motives, were anxious to plunge the nation into a

Digitized by Google

state of anarchy, were naturally the enemies of the great defender of the Rights of Man, and they were determined to gratify their vengeance, whenever a possibility of so doing should offer itself. Before entering into a description of the steps that were taken for this purpose I will give the reader an account of the mode in which he passed his time at the period we are speaking of.

"In Paris, in 1793," he observes, "I had lodgings in the *Rue Faurbourg St. Dénis*, No. 63. They were the most agreeable for situation of any I ever had in Paris, except that they were too remote from the Convention, of which I was then a member. But this was recompensed by their being also remote from the alarms and confusion into which the interior of Paris was then often thrown. The news of those things used to arrive to us, as if we were in a state of quietude in the country. The house, which was enclosed by a wall and gateway from the street, was a good deal like an old mansion farm-house, and the court-yard was like a farm-yard stocked with fowls, ducks, turkies, and geese; which, for amusement, we used to feed out of the window of the parlour on the ground-floor.

Digitized by Google

There were some huts for rabbits, and a stye with two pigs. Beyond, was a garden of more than an acre of ground, well laid out, and stocked with excellent fruit trees. The orange, apricot, and the green-gage plumb, were the best I ever tasted; and it is the only place where I saw the wild cucumber which they told me is poisonous. The place had formerly been occupied by some curious person."

In allusion to the dreadful proceedings which were making such havock amongst the best patriots in France, he continues,—

"As for myself, I used to find some relief by walking alone in the garden after it was dark, and cursing with hearty good will the authors of that terrible system that had turned the character of the Revolution I had been proud to defend.

"I went but little to the Convention, and then only to make my appearance; because I found it impossible for me to join in their tremendous decrees, and useless and dangerous to oppose them. My having voted and spoken extensively, more so than any other member, against the execution of the King, had already fixed a mark upon me: neither dared any of my associates in the Convention to translate,

Digitized by Google

and speak in French for me any thing I might have dared to have written. Pen and ink was then of no use to me. No good could be done by writing, and no printer dared to print; and whatever I might have written for my private amusement, as anecdotes of the times, would have been continually exposed to be examined, and tortured into any meaning that the rage of party might fix upon it; and as to softer subjects, my heart was in distress at the fate of my friends, and my harp was strung upon the weeping willows."

At this period the National Convention was divided into factions, each intent on their own aggrandizement, and each possessing a powerful host of partizans among the people. Terror, hatred, suspicion, revenge, and every other dark and deadly passion had supplanted the just, liberal, and humane principles which marked the commencement of the Revolution, and the wide empire of France became one vast slaughter-house, where the supporters of freedom, and the advocates of despotism were alternately sacrificed at the shrine of factious violence. The exertions of the friends of liberty sooner increased than lessened the effects of the storm, and to defend the interests of truth

Digitized by Google

and the rights of the people, was to invite destruction. The voice of humanity was mute, for the ear of humanity was closed. It is painful to recur to these heart-rending scenes, but justice requires it, and more particularly so, as Mr. Paine was very near falling a victim to the violence of the contending factions.

The gentle, conciliating, and open method in which he had conducted himself, had prevented the possibility of impeaching his political conduct, and to this we must attribute the circumstance of his remaining so long at liberty. The first attempt that was made against him, was by means of an act of the Convention, which decreed that all persons residing in France who were born in England should be imprisoned; but as Mr. Paine was a member of the Convention, and had been complimented with the title of 'Citizen of France,' the decree did not to extend to him. A motion was afterwards made by Bourdon de l'Oise, for expelling foreigners from the Convention. It was evident from the speech of the mover, that Mr. Paine was the principal object aimed at, and as soon as the expulsion was effected, an application was made to the two Committees of Public Safety and General

Digitized by Google

Surety, of which Robespierre was the dictator, and they immediately put him in arrestation under the former decree, for imprisoning persons born in England. On his way to the Luxembourg he contrived to call upon his intimate friend and associate, Joel Barlow, with whom he left the manuscript of the first part of the *Age of Reason*.* This work he intended to be the last of his life, but the proceedings in France, during the year 1793, induced him to delay it no longer. "The circumstance," says he, "that has now taken place in France, of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood, and of every thing appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary, lest in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true." At the time this performance was written, Mr. Paine was in almost daily expectation of being sent to the guillotine,

* See Mr. Barlow's Letter in the Appendix.

Digitized by Google

where many of his friends had already perished; the doctrines, therefore, which it inculcates, must be regarded as the sentiments of a dying man. This is at least a conclusive proof that the work was not the result of a wish to deceive, that, whether true or false, it was the effusion of a disinterested mind; and, in ordinary cases, the fact of a man writing a book under such circumstances, would be admitted as a logical evidence of the rectitude of the doctrines it contained. I do not, however, intend to enter into any discussion relative to our author's religious opinions, until we arrive at the second part of the work. It is, therefore, only necessary at present, to observe, that Mr. Paine had measured his time with such a degree of precision, that he had not finished the book more than six hours before he was arrested and conveyed to the Luxembourg.*

Mr. Paine had remained in prison about

* Had such a singularly favourable coincidence as this happened in the transactions of a christian theological writer, it would undoubtedly have been ascribed to the interposition of Divine Providence, but in the present instance (whatever rational men may think on the subject) the faithful will perhaps find it convenient to attribute the circumstance to the influence of a power of quite an opposite character.

Digitized by Google

three weeks, when it was ascertained to the satisfaction of every one in Paris, except the tyrants who had sent him there, that he had committed no offence; and in consequence of this, the Americans residing in that city, went in a body to the Convention to demand the liberation of their fellow-citizen and friend. The following is a copy of the address presented by them to the President of the Convention; an address which sufficiently shews the high estimation in which Mr. Paine was at this time held by the citizens of the United States.

"Citizens! The French nation had invited the most illustrious of all foreign nations to the honour of representing her.

"Thomas Paine, the apostle of liberty in America, a profound and valuable philosopher, a virtuous and esteemed citizen, came to France and took a seat among you. Particular circumstances rendered necessary the decree to put under arrest all the English residing in France.

"Citizens! Representatives! We come to demand of you Thomas Paine, in the name of the friends of liberty, in the name of the Americans, your brothers and allies; was there any

Digitized by Google

thing more wanted to obtain your demand we would tell you. Do not give to the leagued despots the pleasue of seeing Paine in irons. We shall inform you that the seals put upon the papers of Thomas Paine have been taken off, that the Committee of General Safety examined them, and far from finding among them any dangerous propositions, they only found the love of liberty which characterized him all his life time, that eloquence of nature and philosophy which made him the friend of mankind, and those principles of public morality which merited the hatred of Kings, and the affection of his fellow citizens.

"In short, citizens! If you permit us to restore Thomas Paine to the embraces of his fellow-citizens, we offer to pledge ourselves as securities for his conduct during the short time he shall remain in France."

The Americans who presented the foregoing address, received for answer, that "Mr. Paine was born in England," and it was likewise hinted to them that their attempt to reclaim him as a citizen of the United States, could not be listened to, in consequence of its not being authorized by the American government.

A few days after this, all communication be-

Digitized by Google

tween persons imprisoned, and any person without the prison, was cut off, by an order of the police. In this forlorn and solitary situation Mr. Paine continued for six months, and the only hope that remained for him was, that a new minister would arrive from America to supersede Morris, and that he would be authorized to enquire into the causes of his imprisonment; "but even this hope," Mr. Paine observes, "in the state to which matters were daily arriving, was too remote to have any consolatory effect; and I contented myself with the thought that I might be remembered when it would be too late."

During this long imprisonment he amused himself as well as such a gloomy situation would allow, by writing various pieces of fancy, both in poetry and prose, some of which have since been published. He likewise wrote a considerable portion of the second part of the *Age of Reason* during his incarceration. When he had been in prison about eight months, he was seized with a violent fever, which nearly deprived him of life, and from the effects of which he never afterwards perfectly recovered. This fever, which rendered him completely insensible for more than a month, was evidently the means of preserving his life. Had

Digitized by Google

he remained in health he would probably, according to the routine of the times, have been dragged before the tribunal, and sent to the guillotine, without the trouble of proving either his guilt or his innocence. But the fever fortunately averted the impending danger, and the first thing that he heard of after his recovery was the fall of Robespierre. But the fate of this sanguinary tyrant did not restore him to liberty. The desolator was overthrown, but his faction still remained, and, though considerably humbled, their hostility towards Mr. Paine was unabated. The latter seeing that several of his fellow prisoners were released, addressed a memorial to Mr. Monroe, (who it appears had received no instructions from the American government respecting Mr. Paine) on the subject of his confinement, who behaved towards him with great kindness and attention. The following is a copy of Mr. Monroe's letter to Mr. Paine on this occasion;—

Paris, September 18, 1794.

"DEAR SIR,

"I WAS favoured, soon after my arrival here, with several letters from you, and more latterly with one in the character of a memorial upon

Digitized by Google

the subject of your confinement: and should have answered them at the times they were respectively written, had I not concluded, you would have calculated with certainty upon the deep interest I take in your welfare, and the pleasure with which I shall embrace every opportunity in my power to serve you. I should still pursue the same course, and for reasons which must obviously occur, if I did not find that you are disquieted with apprehensions upon interesting points, and which justice to you and our country equally forbid you should entertain. You mention that you have been informed you are not considered as an American citizen by the Americans, and that you have likewise heard that I had no instructions respecting you by the government. I doubt not the person who gave you the information meant well, but I suspect he did not even convey accurately his own ideas on the first point: for I presume the most he could say is, that you had likewise become a French citizen, and which by no means deprived you of being an American one. Even this, however, may be doubted, I mean the acquisition of citizenship in France, and I confess you have said much to shew that it has not been made.

Digitized by Google

I really suspect that this was all that the gentleman who wrote to you, and those Americans he heard speak upon the subject, meant. It becomes my duty, however, to declare to you, that I consider you as an American citizen, and that you are considered universally in that character by the people of America. As such you are entitled to my attention; and so far as it can be given, consistently with those obligations which are mutual between every government and even a transient passenger, you shall receive it.

"The Congress have never decided upon the subject of citizenship, in a manner to regard the present case. By being with us through the revolution, you are of our country as absolutely as if you had been born there, and you are no more of England than every native American is. This is the true doctrine in the present case, so far as it becomes complicated with any other consideration. I have mentioned it to make you easy upon the only point which could give you any disquietude.

"It is necessary for me to tell you, how much all your countrymen,—I speak of the great mass of the people, are interested in your welfare. They have not forgotten the history of their

Digitized by Google

own revolution, and the difficult scenes through which they passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I trust never will stain, our national character. You are considered by them, as not only having rendered important services in our own revolution, but as being, on a more extensive scale, the friend of human rights, and a distinguished and able advocate in favour of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine, the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent.

"Of the sense which the president has always entertained of your merits, and of his friendly disposition towards you, you are too well assured, to require any declaration of it from me. That I forward his wishes in seeking your safety is what I well know: and this will form an additional obligation on me to perform what I should otherwise consider as a duty.

"You are in my opinion, at present, menaced by no kind of danger. To liberate you, will be an object of my endeavours, and as soon as possible. But you must, until that event shall be accomplished, bear your situation with pa-

Digitized by Google

tience and fortitude ; you will likewise have the justice to recollect, that I am placed here upon a difficult theatre, many important objects to attend to, and with few to consult. It becomes me in pursuit of those, to regulate my conduct with respect to each, as to the manner and the time, as will, in my judgment, be best calculated to accomplish the whole.

" With great esteem and respect consider me personally your friend.

" JAMES MONROE."

Mr. Paine was released from prison on the 4th of November, 1794, having been in confinement for eleven months.

After his liberation he was kindly invited to the house of Mr. Monroe, with whom he remained for about eighteen months. I intend to be as brief in my extracts as the subject will admit, but the following which is taken from one of his letters, written after his return to America, is so descriptive of his situation while in prison, and of another narrow escape which he had in addition to the one already noticed, that I conceive it necessary for the information of the reader.

Digitized by Google

"I was one of the nine members that composed the first committee of constitution. Six of them have been destroyed. Syeyes and myself have survived. He by bending with the times, and I by not bending. The other survivor joined Robespierre, and signed with him the warrant of my arrestation. After the fall of Robespierre, he was seized and imprisoned in his turn, and sentenced to transportation. He has since apologized to me for having signed the warrant, by saying, he felt himself in danger and was obliged to do it.

"Herault Sechelles, an acquaintance of Mr. Jefferson, and a good patriot, was my *suppliant* as Member of the Committee of Constitution; that is, he was to supply my place, if I had not accepted or had resigned, being next in number of votes to me. He was imprisoned in the Luxembourg with me, was taken to the tribunal and the guillotine, and I, his principal, was left.

"There were but two foreigners in the convention, Anarcharsis Cloots and myself. We were both put out of the convention by the same vote, arrested by the same order, and carried to prison together the same night. He was

Digitized by Google

taken to the guillotine, and I was again left.—Joel Barlow was with us when we went to prison.

"Joseph Lebon, one of the vilest characters that ever existed, and who made the streets of Arras run with blood, was my suppliant as Member of the Convention for the department of the *Pais de Calais*. When I was put out of the convention he came and took my place. When I was liberated from prison, and voted again into the convention, he was sent to the same prison and took my place there, and he went to the guillotine instead of me. He supplied my place all the way through.

"One hundred and sixty-eight persons were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, and a hundred and sixty of them guillotined the next day, of which I know I was to have been one; and the manner I escaped that fate is curious, and has all the appearance of accident.

"The room in which I was lodged was on the ground floor, and one of a long range of rooms under a gallery, and the door of it opened outward and flat against the wall; so that when it was open the inside of the door appeared outward, and the contrary when it was shut. I had three comrades, fellow prisoners with me,

Digitized by Google

Joseph Vanhuile of Bruges, since president of the municipality of that town, Michael Robins, and Bastini of Louvain.

"When persons by scores and hundreds were to be taken out of prison for the guillotine, it was always done in the night, and those who performed that office had a private mark or signal by which they knew what rooms to go to, and what number to take. We, as I have said, were four, and the door of our room was marked unobserved by us, with that number in chalk: but it happened, if happening is a proper word, that the mark was put on when the door was open and flat against the wall, and thereby came on the inside when we shut it at night, and the destroying angel passed by it. A few days after this Robespierre fell, and the American ambassador arrived and reclaimed me, and invited me to his house.

"During the whole of my imprisonment, prior to the fall of Robespierre, there was no time when I could think my life worth twenty-four hours, and my mind was made up to meet its fate. The Americans in Paris went in a body to the convention to reclaim me, but without success. There was no party among them with respect to me. My only hope then

Digitized by Google

rested on the Government of America that it would remember me. But the icy heart of ingratitude, in whatever man it be placed, has neither feeling nor sense of honour. The letter of Mr. Jefferson has served to wipe away the reproach, and done justice to the mass of the people of America."

Soon after Mr. Paine's release from prison the Convention passed an unanimous vote to invite him to return to the seat he had formerly occupied. The times were still dangerous, as well from without as within, for the coalition of foreign despots was unbroken, and the constitution not settled. Mr. Paine, however, thought proper to accept the invitation, being resolved to shew that he was not to be alarmed either by prospects or retrospects of danger, and that his principles were neither to be perverted by disgust nor weakened by misfortune.

He was liberated, as before stated, in November, 1794; his bodily health was at this time very much impaired by long confinement, and in September following he was taken dangerously ill. He states that he had felt the approach of his disorder for some time, which occasioned him to hasten to a conclusion of the second part of the *Age of Reason*. This work was

Digitized by Google

published at Paris, early in 1795, and was very shortly afterwards reprinted in England, and the United States. At the time he wrote the first part of the work he was without a bible, nor could he procure one. The investigation which it contained was therefore rather a general, than a detailed enquiry into the Jewish and Christian systems of belief. The first point which he attacks is the doctrine of revelation. He admits the possibility, though he denies the probability of the Supreme Being having ever held personal communication with man. But even allowing this to be the case, he observes, that "revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication. After this it is only an account of something which that person says was revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner, for it was not revelation made to *me*, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him."*

In this manner he proceeds to controvert the principal arguments in favour of christianity. He asserts that it is a system founded entirely

* Age of Reason, Part I. p. 5.

Digitized by Google

upon hearsay evidence, and that we are not obliged to believe it. He next endeavours to shew the similarity of the heathen mythology, and that of the christians, from which he infers that the latter is a copy of the former. Amongst the novel positions which he advanced, was an argument to prove that the word *prophet* had changed its original meaning, that in former times it was synonymous with that of *poet* or *musician;* to prove this he cites the part of the bible, where we are told the prophets of old performed the functions of their vocation by means of pipes, tabrets, horns, harps, and other musical instruments. Having declared his disbelief of what is called revealed religion, and his reasons for such disbelief, he next gives his opinion as to what he conceives to be the only true word of God—the only true revelation; and as his ideas on this subject are of no ordinary stamp, I insert them in his own words, as the best mode of doing justice to the author:—

"It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever existing original, which every man

Digitized by Google

can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not: it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

"Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible Whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the Creation."

It is not hazarding too much to say that the above breathes as pure a spirit of morality and philosophy, as any thing that was ever written on the subject, in either ancient or modern times.

Digitized by Google

It is superior to the bible description of the Deity, for it ascribes to him none of those weaknesses and passions which are so frequently attributed to him by the authors of that book. It is not at all wonderful that the ministers of a corrupt system of religion should calumniate the character of a work, which inculcates the practice of morality as the only religious duty that men are bound to perform, which teaches the most sublime and reverential ideas of the Creator of the universe, and which represents the intercessions of ignorant and bigoted priests, as unnecessary either to the present or future happiness of mankind—it is not at all wonderful that such men should look upon such a work with horror, and load its author with every epithet of calumny and reproach. They are in religion, what courtiers are under a limited monarchy. Both parties are, in nine cases out of ten, aware of the farce, and they tremble at the approach of reason and investigation.

From a great portion of the work before us, it is evident that Mr. Paine possessed an extensive knowledge of astronomy and mathematics, and the mode in which he applies these branches of science, to prove the ignorance of the bible writers, and the falsehood of their statements,

Digitized by Google

is worth the reader's attention. For this, however, I must refer him to the work itself. The extract which I have already given will enable any person to form an idea of the general character of the book, its principles and tendency; I therefore proceed to offer a few observations on the Second Part.

This work is divided into an examination, first of the Old, and, secondly, of the New Testament. In the former our author examines the different books of the bible in rotation, and proves, very clearly, as far as the evidence of circumstances can go, that they were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, and, therefore, that they are anonymous and without authority. He likewise reasons very forcibly against the various acts of horrid cruelty, and gross immorality, which are attributed to the Almighty by Moses, and the other reputed authors of the bible. In this examination the ancient Jews are stripped of the disguise in which commentators generally clothe them, and exposed in their true character—that of the most ignorant and ferocious race of beings which ever disgraced the character of human nature. Their ignorance is inferred from the circumstance of there not being in

Digitized by Google

the whole bible more than one book in which any branch of useful or scientific knowledge is mentioned (the book of Job) and this it appears is a book of the Gentiles and not of the Jews. The ferocity of their character is established by the almost innumerable and unprovoked murders with which the scriptures are filled, and which are blasphemously ascribed to the God of mercy and eternal beneficence.

These are the principal grounds on which our author argues against the divinity of the Bible. In the examination of the New Testament, he exposes the contradictions of the different writers, he cites authorities to prove that the Gospels were not written till a long time after the Evangelists are reported to have lived; and that they were not formed into a book for more than three hundred years after the death of Christ. They were then collected together by the church, and it was decided by vote which were and which were not the word of God.

The work likewise contains some fine ideas on the doctrine of immortality: these form a striking contrast to the gloomy and unnatural doctrines of the resurrection.

On a superficial view of the subject it ap-

Digitized by Google

pears wonderful that a system of belief which is liable to so many objections, not only on the score of probability, but on that of the common principles of morality, should have obtained so general an influence amongst mankind. But when we look at the means which have been used to propagate its principles, we may cease to be surprised at the general credence it has acquired. Its professors preached peace and humility, until, by the increase of their numbers, they were enabled to assume a more formidable tone, but so slow was their progress, and with such general contempt were their doctrines viewed, that even this accession of strength did not take place until three or four centuries after the death of their founder. As the number of their converts increased, their temporal power became more extensive, and all attempts to investigate the truth of their pretensions were put down as impious heresies. Thus, in the first instance, their faith was protected by its obscurity and the professed humility of its disciples: in latter times it has been promoted by means of the sword, and the assiduity of the priesthood; whilst all enquiry into the probability or improbability of its precepts, has been suppressed by

Digitized by Google

the powerful reasoning of the faggot and the inquisition.

It is not to be denied that the New Testament contains some good moral maxims, but these are no proofs of its divinity, for they existed thousands of years before the appearance of Christ, and they will exist when all the desolating wars and shocking persecutions which have been occasioned by the Christian system of faith, shall be sunk in the Lethean stream of oblivion. They are inherent in human nature, and they consequently do not depend upon the belief of any particular system of opinions. It may suit the convenience of the pious teachers of our established religion, to tell us that the practice of virtue, the foundation of our happiness here and of our hopes hereafter, are dependent on the practice of their absurd ceremonies, and the belief of their improbable doctrines; but it is impossible for the reflecting mind to discover in these dogmas any thing more than the motives of an interested priesthood, or the effusions of a distempered imagination. The principles of moral virtue are essentially distinct from the belief of any existing system of faith, they result from the relations of a being with his fellow beings;

Digitized by Google

justice towards ourselves is wisdom; justice towards others is virtue. In society all is relative, there is no happiness independent; we are compelled to sacrifice a part of what we might enjoy, not to be deprived of the whole, and to secure a portion against all assaults. Even here the balance is in favour of reason. However laborious may be the life of the honest man, however encompassed with dangers, however beset with difficulties it may be, that of the vicious character must be more so. He can seldom be tranquil who stands in opposition to the interests of his fellow men; it is impossible for him to conceal from himself that he is surrounded by enemies, or by those who are ready to become so, and this situation is always painful, however splendid may be appearances. Let us add to these considerations, the sublime rectitude of instinct, which corruption may lead astray, but which no false philosophy can ever annihilate, which impels us to admire and love wisdom and generosity of conduct, as we do grandeur and beauty in nature and the arts; and we shall have the source of human virtue, independent of every religious system, of the intricacies of metaphysics, and of the impostures of priests.

Digitized by Google

The publication of the *Age of Reason* called forth a great variety of replies, but the only one which is now remembered is the Bishop of Llandaff's *Apology for the Bible*. It is much to be doubted whether this work, which is written in open defiance of the plainest rules of reason and logic, would have survived the fate of its companions in the same cause, if it had been written by any other person. His character in the world of letters, and in several of the departments in science, coupled with his conduct in Parliament, which induced many to regard him as an independent promoter of the Gospel, gave the work an importance which its contents by no means deserved, and the friends of the church lost no time in publishing it throughout the country. Their zeal in this respect, perhaps, in some measure, answered the purpose they had in view, but it certainly conferred no honour on the Bishop's literary reputation.

Whether the advocates of the Christian faith were or were not conscious of the imperfections of their system, it is evident they were afraid of an enquiry into its merits, and a prosecution was commenced against Mr. Williams, the publisher of the *Age of Reason*. By way

Digitized by Google

of giving a colour to this proceeding, they retained Mr. Erskine on the part of the crown, who strained every effort to procure a verdict. Mr. Kyd made an ingenious and argumentative reply, in behalf of the defendant, but the jury, being special, readily found him guilty, June 4th, 1797. Mr. Paine addressed a Letter to Mr. Erskine on the proceedings of this trial, in which he ridicules the absurd practice of discussing theological subjects before such men as special juries are generally composed of, and cites fresh evidence in support of his former arguments respecting the bible.

Mr. Paine now attended his duty as a member of the Convention, in which capacity he delivered his opinions whenever occasion required. In April, 1795, a committee was appointed to form another new constitution (the former one having been abolished) and the report of this Committee was brought forward on the 23d of June following, by Boissy d'Anglas. This was the constitution of elders and youngsters, a Council of Five Hundred, a Council of Ancients, and an Executive Directory of five. Mr. Paine wrote a speech in opposition to several of the articles of this constitution, which was translated and read to the

Digitized by Google

Convention by Citizen Lanthera, on the 7th of July. One of the subjects against which Mr. Paine contended, was the unjust distinction that was attempted to be made between direct and indirect taxes. Whatever weight these objections ought to have carried, they were not listened to by the Convention, and the constitution of Boissy d'Anglas was adopted. By this decree the Convention was formally destroyed, and as Mr. Paine was not afterwards re-elected, it likewise terminated his public functions in France.

The reign of terror having in some degree subsided, our author's political pen returned to its former employment. About the time that he brought out the Second Part of the *Age of Reason*, he published several pamphlets on subjects less likely to inflame the passions of the bigoted and the ignorant, than investigations into the nature of theology. The principal of these are his *Dissertation on first Principles of Government, Agrarian Justice opposed to Agrarian Law*, and the *Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance*. The first of these is a continuation of the arguments advanced in the *Rights of Man;* the second is a plan for creating in every country a National

Digitized by Google

Fund "to pay to every person when arrived at the age of twenty-one years the sum of fifteen pounds sterling, to enable him or her to begin the world, and also ten pounds sterling, per annum, during life, to every person, now living, of the age of fifty years, and to all others, when they shall arrive at that age, to enable them to live in old age without wretchedness, and to go decently out of the world."

This little essay contains a good deal of original thinking, and close reasoning, though in the present state of society it is not very probable that its recommendations will be ever adopted. The pamphlet on Finance is a proof of Mr. Paine's extensive knowledge on this complicated subject. The events of every day serve to confirm the truth of his opinions respecting the English system, and the agitation which now prevails throughout the country renders the fulfilment of his predictions exceedingly probable.

In 1796, he published at Paris a *Letter to General Washington*. The principal subject of this letter is the treaty which had recently been concluded between the United States and Great Britain. From the articles of the treaty, Mr. Paine contends, that those who concluded

Digitized by Google

it had compromised the honour of America, and the safety of her commerce, from a disposition to crouch to the British minister. The cold neglect of Mr. Washington towards Mr. Paine during his imprisonment, forms likewise a prominent subject of the letter, and but for this circumstance it is probable it would never have appeared. Notwithstanding the high opinion which Mr. Washington professed to entertain of his services in behalf of American independence, he abandoned him in a few years afterwards to the mercy of Robespierre, and during his imprisonment of eleven months he never made a single effort to reclaim him. This was not the treatment which the author of *Common Sense* deserved at the hands of Mr. Washington, either as a private individual, or as President of America. Exclusive of Mr. Paine's being a Citizen of the United States, and of his being consequently entitled to the protection of the government, he had rendered America services which none but the ungrateful could forget, he had therefore no reason to expect that her Chief Magistrate would abandon him in the hour of difficulty. However deserving of our admiration some parts of General Washington's conduct may be, his

Digitized by Google

behaviour in this instance certainly reflects no honour upon his character.

From a variety of circumstances it appears that Mr. Paine regarded the United States as the land of his home. His spirit of universal philanthropy, his republican principles, and his resolution in attacking fraud and superstition, whether in politics or religion, rendered him in a great measure an inhabitant of the world, more than of any particular country; but notwithstanding these peculiarities of disposition, he had domestic feelings and local attachments which neither time nor distance could obliterate. During his residence in Europe, he always declared his intention to return to America: the following extract from a letter of his to a female literary correspondent at New York, will shew the affectionate regard which he constantly cherished for the safety and freedom of the country whose affairs were the means of first launching him into public life.

"You touch me on a very tender point, when you say, *that my friends on your side the water cannot be reconciled to the idea of my abandoning America even for my native England.* They are right. I had rather see my horse, Button, eating the grass of Bordentown,

Digitized by Google

or Morrissania, than see all the pomp and show of Europe.

" A thousand years hence, for I must indulge a few thoughts, perhaps in less, America may be what England now is. The innocence of her character, that won the hearts of all Nations in her favour, may sound like a romance, and her inimitable virtue as if it had never been. The ruins of that liberty, which thousands bled to obtain, may just furnish materials for a village tale, or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility; while the fashionable of that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall deride the principle, and deny the fact.

" When we contemplate the fall of empires, and the extinction of the Nations of the ancient world, we see but little more to excite our regret than the mouldering ruins of pompous palaces, magnificent monuments, lofty pyramids, and walls and towers of the most costly workmanship: but when the empire of America shall fall, the subject for contemplative sorrow will be infinitely greater than crumbling brass or marble can inspire. It will not then be said, Here stood a temple of vast antiquity, here rose a Babel of invisible height, or there a palace of sumptuous extravagance; but here,

Digitized by Google

ah! painful thought! the noblest work of human wisdom, the greatest scene of human glory, the fair cause of freedom, rose and fell! Read this, and then ask if I forget America."

The name of the lady to whom the above was addressed, was Nicholson. She was afterwards married to Colonel Few. Whether or not it was owing to Mr. Paine's opinions on religion, I do not know, but on his return to America he was totally forsaken by her and her husband. When, however, Mr. Paine's dissolution was at hand, they sought his company, and Mrs. Few expressed a wish to renew their former friendship. But Mr. Paine, weak and debilitated as he was, refused to shake hands with her, and indignantly observed, "You have neglected me, and I beg you will leave the room."

In 1797, a society was formed of a number of persons in Paris, under the title of 'Theophilanthropists.' Of this society Paine was one of the principal promoters. Their objects were the propagation of morality and extinction of religious prejudices, and their faith, the belief of one God. At one of their meetings, Mr. Paine delivered a public discourse, in which he stated his reasons for rejecting the

Digitized by Google

doctrines of Atheism, which at that time prevailed in many parts of France.

This year he likewise published a *Letter to the People of France, on the Events of the 18th Fructidor.* Of the merits or demerits of this pamphlet, I am unable to say any thing, as I have not been able to procure a copy. I believe it was never reprinted in England.

About the middle of the same year he also addressed a Letter to Camille Jordan, one of the Council of Five Hundred, respecting his report on the Priests, Public Worship, and Bells. I have only seen a mutilated copy of this production, but as far as I can judge from that, it deserves to be classed with the best works of the author. "It is want of feeling," says he, "to talk of priests and bells, whilstso many infants are perishing in the hospitals, and aged and infirm poor in the streets from the want of necessaries. The abundance that France produces is sufficient for every want, if rightly applied; but priests and bells, like articles of luxury, ought to be the least articles of consideration."

The publication of his deistical opinions certainly lost our author a great number of friends, and, it is possible, that this might be

Digitized by Google

one of the causes of General Washington's indifference. The clear, open, and undisguised method in which he had contested established opinions, called forth the united indignation of the whole order of priesthood in England and America, and there was scarcely a house of devotion, in the old world or the new, which did not resound with their pious execrations. They witnessed with amazement and terror the immense circulation of the work, and they trembled at the possibility that men might assume sufficient courage to think for themselves. Thousands of persons who had never seen the book, and who knew nothing of its contents, except through the perverted medium of their spiritual teachers, rent the air with exclamations against the blasphemies of Thomas Paine, and to conclude these truly charitable proceedings, the English Government called upon the public to condemn the work which they had suppressed by a legal prosecution.

Such are the means adopted by the professors of Christianity to suffocate inquiry, and to dispel the doubts of scepticism. To the credit of mankind it ought to be observed, that the powers of the hierarchy are upon the decline. There was a time when Mr. Paine would have

Digitized by Google

been roasted alive for daring to dispute the dogmas of the church, but the progress of science, and its handmaid, civilization, have softened the ferocity of human nature, and a somewhat milder punishment is now reserved for those who may question the divinity of the Christian religion. For this, however, we are not indebted either to the morality of the religion, or the piety of its professors,—we owe it to the progress which mankind have made in freeing themselves from the profane and barbarous notions which such a system of belief is calculated to diffuse wherever it is tolerated.

In consequence of the publication of his religious opinions, Mr. Paine not only lost many of the admirers of his former writings, but it likewise deprived him of many personal friends. This, coupled with the harsh treatment he had experienced from the factions in France, and a constitution impaired, if not broken, from long imprisonment, rendered him at times extremely low and dejected, and it is to be lamented that these fits of despondency were often succeeded by fits of inebriation. This is the only fault, or rather weakness, which I have been able to discover in his conduct. But this, notwithstanding all that his enemies have said,

Digitized by Google

forms no exception to the general benevolence, patriotism, and humanity of his disposition. It is a failing and not a vice, and the man who practises it, as Mr. Paine seems occasionally to have done, with a view to rid himself of unpleasant reflections arising from unmerited neglect, deserves our sympathy, instead of our reprobation. He is not the first great man who has sought a retreat from the persecutions and contumely of the world, in the opiate effects of Bacchanalian enjoyment; many of the greatest geniuses which the world has produced have fallen a prey to the same practices; and an instance, perhaps, could not be found where such habits have been attended with less evil than in the case of Mr. Paine. His only object appears to have been the relief of mental and bodily pain,* and the only bad effect which these habits produced, was a negligence in his person, and a carelessness in his manners. These, which would have been regarded

* During his confinement an abscess had formed itself in his side, which remained immoveable to the day of his death. Those who know what an abscess is, will be able to form some idea of the severe bodily pain with which he was at times afflicted.

Digitized by Google

as trifles in the history of any other man, have been magnified into importance by the detractors of Paine, his little weaknesses have been collected together and branded with the foulest of epithets, and the very means which he adopted to produce a temporary forgetfulness of his injuries, have been held up as proofs of the criminality of his character. His works are the best refutation of these calumnies, and while they exhibit a splendid proof of the gigantic powers of his mind, they are an indubitable evidence of the candour, generosity, and benevolence of his heart.

One of the most interesting sketches of the latter part of Mr. Paine's residence in France, is contained in Mr. Yorke's Letters from that country in the year 1802. If this statement be correct, and with the exception of one or two trifling particulars I have every reason to believe this is the case, it is extremely valuable. I shall therefore give the account in Mr. Yorke's words, trusting that the reader will find an ample apology for so long an extract, in the nature of the matter which it contains.

" The name of Thomas Paine is so familiar to every one, that had we not been previously acquainted with each other, I should have con-

Digitized by Google

trived to have had an interview with him, during my residence in Paris. Nearly ten years had elapsed since we were last together, and I felt deeply interested in learning his opinions concerning the French revolution, after all the experience which so long a period of uninterrupted storms and convulsion must necessarily have afforded him. Accordingly, he was amongst the first on whom I called, and I have since been frequently in his company.

"It was not without considerable difficulty that I discovered his residence, for the name of Thomas Paine is now as odious in France as it is in England, perhaps more so. A bookseller's shop in the *Palais Royale* appeared the most likely place to enquire, and thither I immediately repaired. But I had no sooner mentioned his name, than the bookseller, his wife, his son, and a by-stander, fell upon me in such an unmerciful manner, calling Paine *scelerat*, *bandit*, *coquin*, and ascribing to him the resistance which Leclerc had experienced from the negroes of St. Domingo, of which they had just received intelligence, that I found it necessary to decamp without losing a moment of time. Being at a loss how to proceed, I determined to betake myself to the hotel of the

Digitized by Google

American minister, and as I was passing through the *Rue des Petits Pères*, I saw over the gateway of White's, in large letters, *Hotel de Philadelphie;* in consequence of which, I entered and enquired for Thomas Paine. The master told me that he never came there *now*, but that he was sometimes to be found at the adjoining coffee house. Thus far I was making some progress. On applying where I had been directed, I was informed that he had not been there for several days, but that he lived at a bookseller's in the *Rue du Thèatre Français. A Bookseller!* after the dressing I had just received, a bookseller's shop sounded very terrific in my ears. However, I was resolved, and set off with a good heart, being persuaded that if Paine lived there, neither the bookseller, his wife, his son, nor a by-stander, would eat me. I took the precaution as soon as I had reached the street to enquire how *many* booksellers lived in it, and the immediate answer was, that an American bookseller inhabited No. 4. After having mounted to the second story, I rang at the bell, and on a jolly looking woman opening the door, I asked, in a meek and humble tone (for the reception I had met with at the *Palais Royale* was still in my mind) whe-

Digitized by Google

ther Mr. Paine lived there? After having surveyed me from head to feet, she answered in the affirmative, but said she believed he was not at home, and requested me to enter. As soon as I had walked into her apartment, she held the candle pretty close to my face, and said, 'Do you wish to see Mr. Paine?' To which I instantly replied, 'I am just come from England, and am extremely anxious to see him, as I am an old acquaintance whom he has not seen these ten years.' Even as the sun dispels the mist, so did this well-timed declaration change the features of her countenance, which now became nothing but smiles and joy. She continued; 'He is taking a nap; but I'll go and wake him.'

"In two minutes she returned, and ushered me into a little dirty room, containing a small wooden table and two chairs. 'This,' said she, 'is Mr. Paine's room!' I never sat down in such a filthy apartment in the whole course of my life. The chimney hearth was an heap of dirt; there was not a speck of cleanliness to be seen; three shelves were filled with pasteboard boxes, each labelled after the manner of a minister of foreign affairs, *Correspondence Americaine, Brittannique; Française; Notices*

Digitized by Google

politiques; Le citoyen Francais, &c. In one corner of the room stood several huge bars of iron, curiously shaped, and two large trunks; opposite the fire place, a board covered with pamphlets and journals, having more the appearance of a dresser in a scullery than a sideboard. Such was the wretched habitation of Thomas Paine, one of the founders of American Independence; whose extraordinary genius must ever command attention; and whose writings have summoned to action the minds of the most enlightened politicians of Europe! How different the humble dwelling of this Apostle of Freedom, from those gorgeous mansions tenanted by the founders of the French Republic!

"After I had waited a short time, Mr. Paine came down stairs, and entered the room, dressed in a long flannel gown. I was forcibly struck with his altered appearance. Time seemed to have made dreadful ravages over his whole frame, and a settled melancholy was visible on his countenance. He desired me to be seated, and although he did not recollect me for a considerable time, he conversed with his usual affability. I confess I felt extremely surprised that he should have forgotten me; but I resolved

Digitized by Google

not to make myself known to him, as long as it could be avoided with propriety. In order to try his memory, I referred to a number of circumstances which had occurred while we were in company, but carefully abstained from hinting that we had ever lived together. He would frequently put his hand to his forehead, and exclaim, 'Ah! I know that voice, but my recollection fails!' At length, I thought it time to remove his suspense, and stated an incident which instantly recalled me to his mind. It is impossible to describe the sudden change which this effected in his appearance and manner; his countenance brightened, he pressed me by the hand, and a silent tear stole down his cheek. Nor was I less affected than himself. For some time we sat without a word escaping from our lips. 'Thus are we met once more, Mr. Paine,' I resumed, 'after a long separation of ten years, and after having been both of us severely weather-beaten.' 'Aye,' he replied, 'and who would have thought that we should meet at Paris?' He then enquired what motive had brought me here, and on my explaining myself, he observed with a smile of contempt, 'They have shed blood enough for liberty, and now they have it

Digitized by Google

in perfection. This is not a country for an honest man to live in; they do not understand any thing at all of the principles of free government, and the best way is, to leave them to themselves. You see they have conquered all Europe, only to make it more miserable than it was before.' Upon this, I remarked, that I was surprised to hear him speak in such desponding language of the fortune of mankind, and that I thought much might yet be done for the Republic. 'Republic!' he exclaimed, 'do you call this a Republic? Why, they are worse off than the slaves at Constantinople; for there, they expect to be bashaws in heaven, by submitting to be slaves below, but here, they believe neither in heaven nor hell, and yet are slaves by choice. I know of no Republic in the world, except America, which is the only country for such men as you and I. It is my intention to get away from this place as soon as possible, and I hope to be off in autumn; you are a young man, and may see better times, but I have done with Europe, and its slavish politics.' I admitted that America might be always looked to as the country of forlorn hope, but that I entertained great doubts whether I should be happy in it; and I enumerated my

Digitized by Google

objections, concluding with the want of society, and my apprehensions respecting the yellow fever, which I stated you had represented to me in a very unfavourable light. Both these objections he endeavoured to controvert, by shewing that there was as good society in America, and *better* in many respects, than in all Europe; and as to the yellow fever, it had been imported, and there could be no doubt it would wholly disappear by the pursuit of proper precautions; he then made use of some ingenious arguments to prove this, and affirmed that it had of late years scarcely ever proved fatal to persons in easy circumstances, on account of their having withdrawn into the country at its first appearance. But his argument carried irresistible conviction to my mind, when he insisted that it was the only circumstance that had deterred Europeans from emigrating thither, which he illustrated by a comparative statement of the influx of population before and since the breaking out of that pestilential malady.

In the course of our long conversation upon America, he put into my hands a letter, which he had recently received from Mr. Jefferson, the President. It was dictated with the ease

Digitized by Google

and freedom of one old friend writing to another. He begins with congratulating Mr. Paine on his determination to exchange the Old for the New World, as he will find on his return a very favourable change in the political opinions of the citizens of the United States, who are happily come back to those enlightened principles, which he (Mr. Paine) had so usefully contributed to spread over the world. He trusts that this intelligence will afford him pleasure, and that in returning to a country where his principles are daily practised by the government, he will at length experience that happiness and repose which his exertions in the cause of mankind deserve. As Mr. Paine had expressed a desire to return in a *public manner*, he states that the sloop of war, which had brought the minister, Livingstone, to France, would return at a given time, and convey him to America, if he could make it *convenient* to take advantage of the occasion. The rest of the letter is in the usual tone of friendship, and assures Mr. Paine he shall meet with an hearty welcome.

" As soon as I had finished the perusal of the letter, he observed, that there now remained only four persons who had acted in concert during

Digitized by Google

the American revolution: John Adams, (the late President) Jefferson, Livingstone, and himself. He then gave me two copies of Mr. Jefferson's speech, which, he said, he had caused to be printed in France, by way of contrast with the government of the First Consul. He continued, (laughing at the same time,) 'It would be a curious circumstance, if I should hereafter be sent as Secretary of Legation to the English court, which outlawed me. What a hubbub it would create at the King's levee, to see Tom Paine presented by the American ambassador! All the bishops and women would faint away; the women would suppose I came to ravish them, and the bishops to ravish their tithes. I think it would be a good joke.' I took this opportunity of suggesting, that he had not altogether given up Europe, since he thought of revisiting it in an official capacity. He answered, that it was possible, but not probable at his time of life; that he should dispose of his estate, live upon the interest, and amuse himself with mechanics, and writing memoirs of his life and correspondence, two volumes of which he had already completed.

"The estate which he possesses in America is valuable, and must produce more than, from

Digitized by Google

his habits, he can spend. Many years ago he had been offered £1200. for it, afterwards, he said, £2000. sterling was bidden, and at last Judge Greswold tendered him £4000. for it, which he also refused, because he knew it was worth more, as he estimates it at about £7000.

"Upon my enquiring how he had passed his life since we parted, he gave a long account of his occupations, from the time that he was sent to prison. During our invasion of Holland, he went to Brussels, where he passed a few days with General Brune, with a view, as he declared, of accompanying him to Holland, 'to see the last of John Bull.' He stated, however, that in France and the French army there was but one opinion concerning that event; and even General Brune himself had avowed, that it was impossible to prevent the final success of the English.

"While he was in prison, he wrote his 'Age of Reason,' and amused himself with carrying on an epistolary correspondence with Lady Smith, under the assumed name of 'The Castle in the Air,' and her Ladyship answered, under the title of 'The Little Corner of the World;' which has been continued to the present day without intermission. Some of this

Digitized by Google

correspondence which he shewed me, is extremely beautiful and interesting; considering the dreadful places, times, and circumstances in which it was composed.

"I have often been in company with Mr. Paine, since my arrival here; and I was not a little surprised to find him wholly indifferent about the public spirit of England, or the remaining influence of his doctrines among its people. Indeed, he seemed to dislike the mention of the subject; and when, one day, in order to provoke discussion, I told him I had altered my opinions upon many of his principles, he answered, 'You certainly have the right to do so; but you cannot alter the nature of things; the French have alarmed all honest men; but still truth is truth. Though you may not think that my principles are practicable in England, without bringing on a great deal of misery and confusion, you are, I am sure, convinced of their justice." Here he took occasion to speak in terms of the utmost severity against Mr. ———, who had obtained a seat in parliament, and said that 'parsons were always mischievous fellows when they turned politicians.' This gave rise to an observation respecting his 'Age of Reason,' the publication

Digitized by Google

of which I said had lost him the good opinion of numbers of his English advocates. He became uncommonly warm at this remark, and in a tone of singular energy declared, that he would not have published it, if he had not thought it calculated to 'inspire mankind with a more exalted idea of the Supreme Architect of the Universe, and to put an end to villainous imposture.' He then broke out with the most violent invectives against our received opinions, accompanying them at the same time with some of the most grand and sublime conceptions of an Omnipotent Being, that I ever heard or read of. In the support of his opinion, he avowed himself ready to lay down his life, and said, 'the Bishop of Llandaff may roast me in Smithfield, if he likes, but human torture cannot shake my conviction.' To this I answered, 'The Bishop of Llandaff is a man of too enlightened, tolerant, and humane a disposition, to wish you roasted, or any other man, for differing with him in opinion. You cannot say that his apology does not breathe tolerance in every page.'—'Aye, it is an Apology, indeed, for priestcraft; but parsons will meddle and make mischief;—they always hurt their own cause, and make things worse than they were

Digitized by Google

before; if he had said nothing, the church would have lost nothing; but I have another rod in pickle for *Mr. Bishop.*' Here he reached down a copy of the Bishop's work, interleaved with remarks upon it, which he read to me; after which he admitted the liberality of the Bishop, and regretted, that in all the controversies among men, a similar temper was not maintained. But, in proportion as he appeared listless of politics, he seemed quite a zealot in his religious creed; of which the following is an instance.

"An English lady of our acquaintance, not less remarkable for her talents than for elegance of manners, entreated me to contrive that she might have an interview with Mr. Paine. In consequence of this, I invited him to dinner on a day when we were to be favoured with her company. But, as she is a very rigid Roman Catholic, I cautioned Mr. Paine, before-hand, against touching upon religious subjects, assuring him at the same time, that she felt much interested to make his acquaintance. With much good nature he promised to be *discreet.* Although the Lady I allude to is, perhaps, one of the most liberal and tolerant of her sex, I knew that on this

Digitized by Google

point she felt tenderly; for which reason this preliminary hint was not ill timed:

"For above four hours he kept every one in astonishment and admiration of his memory, his keen observation of men and manners, his numberless anecdotes of the American Indians, of the American war, of Franklin, Washington, and even of his Majesty, of whom he told several curious facts of humour and benevolence. His remarks on genius and taste, can never be forgotten by those present. Thus far every thing went on as I could wish; the sparkling champagne gave a zest to his conversation, and we were all delighted. But, alas! alas! an expression relating to his '*Age of Reason*' having been mentioned by one of the company, he broke out immediately. He began with Astronomy,—addressing himself to Mrs. Y—, he declared, that the least inspection of the motion of the stars, was a convincing proof that Moses was a liar. Nothing could stop him. In vain I attempted to change the subject, by employing every artifice in my power, and even by attacking with vehemence his political principles. He returned to the charge with unabated ardour. I called upon him for a song, though I never heard him sing in my

Digitized by Google

life. He struck up instantly one of his own composition; but the instant he had finished it, he resumed his favourite topic. Every time he took breath, he gained fresh strength, and on he went, with inconceivable rapidity, until the ladies gradually stole unobserved from the room, and left another gentleman and myself to contest, or rather to leave him master of the field of battle.

"I felt extremely mortified, and remarked that he had forgotten his promise, and that it was not fair to wound so deeply the opinions of the ladies. 'Oh!' said he, 'they'll come again. What a pity it is that people should be so prejudiced!'—To which I retorted, that their prejudices might be virtues. 'If so,' he replied, 'the blossoms may be beautiful to the eye, but the root is weak.' I desired him to prove it. He continued as follows, declaring that he could not do better than cite his own expressions, written years ago.*

"Upon my observing that I did not recollect the passage in any of his works, he stated that

* The passage here recited is an extract from the Letter to the Abbe Raynal, but as I have before inserted it, I consider its repetition unnecessary. See p. 83.

Digitized by Google

it was written in America twenty years ago, and might be found in one of his pamphlets, the name of which has escaped my recollection. But he repeated it, at our request, several times, and allowed me to write it down. One of the most extraordinary properties belonging to Mr. Paine, is, his power of retaining every thing he has written in the course of his life. It is a fact, that he can repeat word for word every sentence in his '*Common Sense*, *Rights of Man*, &c. &c., which I attribute, first, to the unparelleled slowness with which he composes every passage he writes; secondly, to its having been profoundly meditated; and, lastly, to his dislike to every sort of reading. The Bible is the only book which he has studied, and there is not a verse in it that is not familiar to him. Wonderful and productive as his mathematical genius is unquestionably, he has often assured me, that he never read any thing upon the subject. Indeed, he seems to have a contemptuous opinion not only of books, but of their authors; for in shewing me one day the beautiful models of two bridges he had devised, he observed that Dr. Franklin once told him, that 'books are written to please, houses built

Digitized by Google

for great men, churches for priests, but no bridge for the people.'

"These models exhibit an extraordinary degree, not only of skill, but of taste, in mechanics; and are wrought with extreme delicacy, entirely by his own hands. The largest is nearly four feet in length; the iron works, the chains, and every other article belonging to it, were forged and manufactured by himself. It is intended as the model of a bridge, which is to be constructed across the Delaware, extending 480 feet with only *one arch*. The other is to be erected over a lesser river, whose name I forget, and is likewise a single arch, and of his own workmanship, excepting the chains, which, instead of iron, are cut out of pasteboard, by the fair hand of his correspondent, the "Little Corner of the World," whose indefatigable perseverance is extraordinary. He was offered £3000, for these models, and refused it. The iron bars, which I before mentioned that I noticed in a corner of his room, were also forged by himself, as the model of a crane, of a new description. He put them together, and exhibited the power of the lever, to a most surprising degree."

Digitized by Google

Mr. Yorke in the above extract states the correspondence between Lady Smith and Mr. Paine to have been extremely beautiful and interesting; as a proof of this, the following specimen is subjoined.

FROM THE CASTLE IN AIR,

TO

THE LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD.

In the region of clouds where the whirlwinds arise,
My castle of fancy was built:
The turrets reflected the blue of the skies,
And the windows with sun-beams were gilt.

The rainbow sometimes, in its beautiful state,
Enamell'd the mansion around,
And the figures that fancy in clouds can create,
Supplied me with gardens and ground.

I had grottos and fountains, and orange-tree groves,
I had all that enchantment has told;
I had sweet shady walks for the Gods and their Loves,
I had mountains of coral and gold.

But a storm that I felt not, had risen and roll'd,
While wrapt in a slumber I lay:
And when I looked out in the morning, behold!
My castle was carried away.

Digitized by Google

It pass'd over rivers, and valleys, and groves—
The world, it was all in my view—
I thought of my friends, of their fates, of their loves,
And often, full often of you.

At length it came over a beautiful scene,
That nature in silence had made:
The place was but small—but 'twas sweetly serene,
And chequer'd with sunshine and shade.

I gazed and I envied with painful good will,
And grew tired of my seat in the air:
When all of a sudden my castle stood still,
As if some attraction was there.

Like a lark from the sky it came fluttering down,
And placed me exactly in view—
When who should I meet, in this charming retreat,
This corner of calmness—but you.

Delighted to find you in honour and ease,
I felt no more sorrow nor pain;
And the wind coming fair, I ascended the breeze,
And went back with my castle again.

The above was written during his residence in Paris. Mr. Paine had very early in life corresponded with the lady to whom it was addressed, his letters, like the foregoing, being dated from the "Castle in the Air," and hers from the "Little Corner of the World." For

Digitized by Google

reasons which he knew not, their intercourse was suddenly suspended, and for some time he believed his friend in obscurity and distress. Many years afterwards, however, he met her unexpectedly at Paris, in the most affluent circumstances, and married to Sir Robert Smith.

In Mr. Yorke's Letters there is another piece, on *Forgetfulness*. This is replete with the most beautiful imagery, but Mr. Yorke, from some motive which I cannot discover, has cancelled so great a part of it, that much of the interest is lost which it would otherwise possess.

As the Letter of Mr. Jefferson which Mr. Yorke alludes to, shews the high opinion which that gentleman entertained of our author's services, and his wish to accommodate him by every possible kindness, I here subjoin a copy of it.

"You express a wish in your letter to return to America by a national ship; Mr. Dawson, who brings over the treaty, and who will present you with this letter, is charged with orders to the captain of the Maryland to receive and accommodate you back, if you can be ready to depart at such a short warning.

Digitized by Google

You will in general find us returned to sentiments worthy of former times; in these it will be your glory to have steadily laboured, and with as much effect as any man living. That you may live long to continue your useful labours, and reap the reward in the thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer. Accept the assurances of my high esteem, and affectionate attachment.

"THOMAS JEFFERSON."

Soon after Mr. Paine's release from the Luxembourg, it appears he made an effort to return to America, but he found the obstacles more numerous than he expected. The misconduct of Mr. Monroe's predecessor had rendered his reception in France a very unpleasant one, and as soon as he had effected a good understanding with the government of that country, he wished to transmit some dispatches to America, by a person with whom he could likewise confide a verbal communication, and he fixed upon Mr. Paine. For this purpose he applied to the Committee of Public Safety for a passport, but as Mr. Paine had been voted again into the Convention, it was only the Convention who could grant the passport, and

Digitized by Google

as an application to them would have made his departure publicly known, he was obliged to sustain the disappointment, and Mr. Monroe to lose the opportunity.

When Mr. Monroe left France, our author was to have accompanied him, but owing to some unforeseen circumstances he was unable to complete his arrangements for that purpose. It was fortunate he could not, for the vessel in which that minister returned was boarded by a British frigate in her passage, and every part of her searched, down even to the hold, for Thomas Paine. He then went to Havre, thinking that he should be able to embark there without its being known, but he found that several British frigates were cruising in sight of the port, and he thereupon returned to Paris. Seeing himself cut off from every opportunity that was within his power to command, he wrote to Mr. Jefferson requesting that if the fate of the election should put him in the Chair of the Presidency, and he should have occasion to send a frigate to France, he would give him the opportunity of returning by it. This application produced an answer from Mr. Jefferson of which the letter before cited is a copy. He did not, however, go

Digitized by Google

by this vessel, the notice being too short. He next agreed to embark with Commodore Barney, in a vessel he had engaged, but in this, as in some of the former cases, the protecting hand of Providence was very visible, he was accidentally detained beyond the time, and the vessel sunk at sea. Such a multitude of difficulties and narrow escapes were perhaps never concentrated together in the execution of so simple a project. He finally embarked from Havre on the 1st of September, and arrived at Baltimore on the 30th of October, 1802.

During some of the latter part of his residence in France, Mr. Paine boarded at the house of a Mr. Nicholas Bonneville; to this gentleman's hospitality he was much indebted, particularly as the war between France and England at times rendered the transmission of pecuniary supplies from America a matter of difficulty. Mr. Bonneville had often declared his intention to emigrate to the United States by the first opportunity, and when Mr. Paine left France, he, by way of returning Mr. Bonneville's kindness, invited him and his family to accompany him to America. The proposal was readily acceded to, but as Mr. Bonneville could not get ready by the time appointed, it

Digitized by Google

was agreed that his wife and three sons should embark with Mr. Paine, and that their father should follow them as soon as he conveniently could. Whether this was a design on the part of Bonneville to rid himself of his wife is more than I can say, but it is certain that he never troubled himself about her or the children for some years afterwards, and they were entirely abandoned to the generosity of Mr. Paine.

In addition to his estate at New Rochelle, Mr. Paine had likewise a small house with some land attached to it, at Bordentown: these he offered to Mrs. Bonneville, and proposed to establish her as a school-mistress, but this she declined. Mr. Paine was therefore charged with her entire maintenance, and that of the children, an act of kindness which he cheerfully performed, and with no other feeling than that of gratitude for the assistance which he had received from her and Mr. Bonneville during his residence in Paris. Yet even this act of disinterested liberality has furnished materials for the malignity of his enemies, who have attempted to create suspicions that some improper connection existed between Mr. Paine and Madame Bonneville, while it is a fact,

Digitized by Google

beyond dispute, that they scarcely ever lived together, after our author's return to America.

His arrival in the United States caused a great deal of agitation amongst the leaders of political parties. The advocates of monarchy and hereditary government, who call themselves federalists, were all in a state of the utmost confusion. The republican party hailed the return of their friend and defender by every demonstration of joy; the President, Mr. Jefferson, received him with every token of kindness, expressing an anxious wish that he would continue his labours in the great cause of mankind. Having congratulated Mr. Jefferson on the state of the country, and the humbled condition of those who had expressed their hostility to the representative system of government, he proceeded to New York. Amongst those who wished to obtain a sight of Mr. Paine, none were more anxious than the leaders of the different sects of religion. Amidst the interruptions which he experienced from the piety of these persons, the following anecdote ought not to be omitted. Passing through Baltimore, he was accosted by the Reverend Mr. Hargrove, minister of a new sect, called

Digitized by Google

the New Jerusalemites. "You are Mr. Paine," said Mr. Hargrove. "Yes."—"My name is Hargrove, sir; I am minister of the New Jerusalem church here. We, sir, explain the scripture in its true meaning. The key has been lost above four thousand years, and we have found it."—"Then," said Paine, drily, "it must have been very rusty."

Mr. Paine remained for some time at New York, and resided at Lovett's Hotel. Here his former friends crowded round him; a public dinner was shortly afterwards held in honour of the author of *Common Sense*, and every symptom of pleasure was manifested at his safe arrival in the land of his adoption.

But though these expressions of pleasure on the part of some of his admirers were very flattering, he saw that the fanatic violence which had been aroused by the publication of the *Age of Reason* had not subsided; he felt that many of those whom he had formerly regarded as his best friends, treated him with indifference, that they sooner shunned than courted his company, and that those amongst the higher classes, who even secretly approved of his principles, avoided his society.

Amongst those of his former friends who

Digitized by Google

testified their disapprobation of his religious opinions was Mr. Samuel Adams. This gentleman wrote a very polite letter to him, in which he acknowledged his literary services during the revolution, and stating his deep regret that he should have "turned his mind to a defence of infidelity." In his reply, he states some of his reasons for his disbelief of what is termed revealed religion, and declares, that he had no other object in view, in writing the *Age of Reason*, than to give mankind a more exalted idea of the Supreme Being, and to promote the cause of universal philanthropy. He advises Mr. Adams to repose his confidence in his Creator, instead of the reveries of priests, and gives his opinion, that he will find more consolation, even in his last moments, "in the silence of resignation, than in the murmuring wish of prayer."

Mr. Paine now concluded on living at his farm at New Rochelle. He left New York for this purpose in June 1803, and boarded with the person who then occupied it for about seven weeks, when he again returned to the city. This person left it in the spring of 1804, and Mr. Paine went again to it, taking with him two of Mrs. Bonneville's children. As he

Digitized by Google

did not intend to meddle with the farming business himself, he hired a person to take care of it, and for the sake of being more comfortable, he took lodgings in the neighbourhood.

In this manner he passed the greater part of his time till the day of his death, amusing himself with mechanics, and occasionally writing for the newspapers.

In 1804, he published a letter to the *English People on the Invasion of England*, in which he exposes the folly and perfidy of the British Government towards Bonaparte, and describes the mode in which the intended invasion was to have been executed. Soon after this, he published a little essay on *Gun Boats*. In this he shews the method in which the shores of a maritime country may be defended without a navy; and his plan has this peculiar excellence, that while it answers all the usual purposes of defence, it furnishes none of those inducements to go to war which have hitherto created such misery all over the world.

In 1805, the yellow fever was very prevalent at New York, and Mr. Paine published a small tract, in which he gave his opinion as to its causes, and the means of preventing it. He

Digitized by Google

ascribes this dreadful malady principally to the impure effluvia arising from the improper construction of wharfs and other erections on the banks of rivers, and suggests a mode by which they may be built without the risk of similar consequences.

In 1806, he resided with Mr. Jarvis, a portrait painter, of Church Street, New York. By this time he was become very infirm, and age and ill treatment, it appears, had considerably injured his temper. But with all these disadvantages, Mr. Jarvis describes him as perfectly good natured, if kindly treated; easily provoked, but easily appeased. But though his body was sinking into a state of feebleness, his mind was unimpaired, and his letters to the citizens of America, discover all that vigour of intellect, all that freshness of imagination, which distinguished his earlier productions.

A curious anecdote is related of him, while he resided with Mr. Jarvis. He usually took a short nap after dinner, and would not be disturbed by any person who might wish to see him. One afternoon, a very old lady, dressed in a large scarlet cloak, knocked at the door, and enquired for Thomas Paine. Mr. Jarvis told her he was asleep. "I am very sorry for that," she said,

Digitized by Google

"for I want to see him very particularly." Thinking it a pity to make an old woman call twice, Mr. Jarvis took her into Mr. Paine's bedroom, and waked him. He arose upon one elbow, and with an expression of eye that staggered the old woman back a step or two, asked "What do you want?"—"Is your name Paine?"—"Yes."—"Well, then, I come from Almighty God to tell you, that if you do not repent of your sins, and believe in our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, you will be damned, and ——"—"Poh, poh, it is not true. You were not sent with any such impertinent message. Jarvis, make her go away. Pshaw, he would not send such a foolish, ugly old woman as you about with his messages. Go away. Go back. Shut the door." The old lady raised both her hands, kept them so, and walked away in mute astonishment.

Sometime in the year 1807, Mr. Paine published his *Examination of the Passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called Prophesies concerning Jesus Christ; to which is prefixed, an Essay on Dream, with an Appendix containing his private Thoughts on a Future State*, &c. The Essay on Dream is a curious and ingenious piece of reasoning. It is alto-

Digitized by Google

gether original. As far as we can account for the wanderings of the mind, while the body is in a state of repose, he certainly has explained this singular phenomenon. The enquiries which have taken place on this interesting subject have been principally confined to physiology, but Mr. Paine's mode of treating it is exclusively metaphysical. "The three great faculties of the mind," he observes, "are *imagination*, *judgment*, and *memory*. Every action of the mind comes under one or other of these faculties. In a state of wakefulness, as in the day time, these three faculties are all active; but that is seldom the case in sleep, and never perfectly; and this is the cause that our dreams are not so regular and rational, as our waking thoughts." In this manner he goes on to explain the various phenomena of sleep, which he concludes are more or less owing to the absence of one or more of these faculties of the mind. He then reasons on the absurdity of building a system of religion on the dreams of men who are reported to have lived near two thousand years ago. But the most important part of the work, is that wherein he proves the utter inapplicability of what are termed the prophesies to the person of Jesus Christ. He shews

Digitized by Google

beyond the possibility of refutation, that the passages in the Old Testament, which commentators have distorted into predictions of a Saviour, have no reference to any thing but what was passing at the time the writers lived. In his ' Private Thoughts on a Future State,' he evidently believes in the doctrine of immortality, but his ideas are very different to those of the writers of the New Testament. " The moral world," he says, " like the physical world, is composed of numerous degrees of character, running imperceptibly one into the other, in such a manner, that no fixed point of division can be found in either." He therefore concludes that future punishment, or happiness, will be in proportion to the extent which men are vicious or virtuous in this world, and that there will be as many shades of enjoyment and pain in a future state, as there are degrees of moral character in the present. These ideas, are however, like all other ideas on the same subject, purely speculative ; they are mere conjecture, and it may be said in this, as indeed in all other matters concerning religion, that the reasonableness of the thing can alone be admitted as an evidence of its probability.

The pamphlet in which the foregoing doc-

Digitized by Google

trines were contained was afterwards re-published in England, under the title of the *Age of Reason, part the third.* The government alarmed at the truths it inculcated, prosecuted the publisher, Mr. D. I. Eaton, who, after experiencing the most brutal treatment from the judge, Lord Ellenborough, was found guilty, and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment, and to stand in the pillory. It is impossible to think of these legal barbarities, perpetrated as they are in behalf of Christianity, without feelings of the most pointed indignation. It is impossible to view these proceedings, without wishing for the destruction of the church which requires them, and the state which inflicts them. They are equally criminal, equally deserving of our abhorrence, and the sceptre and the cross are at once the signs of their authority, the emblems of their faith, and the instruments of their cruelty.

To return to Mr. Paine. In January, 1809, he began to be so feeble and infirm, as to be incapable of doing any thing for himself. At this time he boarded with Mr. Ryder, at Greenwich. He often, in conversation with Mr. Ryder, expressed his wish to die, seeing that there was no other chance of putting an end

Digitized by Google

to his bodily sufferings. That this subject was constantly before his mind, is clearly proved by the anxiety which he shewed about the disposition of his body after his decease. As he had been partly brought up amongst the Quakers, he expressed a wish to be interred in their burying-ground. With this view, he desired Mr. Ryder to go to Mr. Willett Hicks, a respectable Quaker gentleman, whose country seat was in the neighbourhood, and to say that he wished to see him. Mr. Hicks called upon him on the 19th March, and after the customary compliments, Mr. Paine observed, "that as he was going to leave one place, it was necessary to provide another. I am now in my seventy-third year, and do not expect to live long: I wish to be buried in your burying-ground. I could be buried in the Episcopal church, but they are so arrogant; or in the Presbyterian, but they are so hypocritical.' He added, that his father was a Quaker, and though he did not think well of any Christian sect, he thought better of the Quakers than of any other. Mr. Hicks laid his request before the committee, who have the superintendance of the Quaker cemetery and funerals, eight in number, of which he himself was one, but the

Digitized by Google

committee refused to comply with his request. This decision, which was made known to him with as much delicacy as possible, affected him considerably.

During his visit Mr. Hicks took the liberty of entering into some very serious conversation with our author respecting his religious opinions, when the latter declared that "his sentiments respecting the Christian religion were now precisely the same as they were when he wrote the *Age of Reason*." This was a very short time before his death, an event which he both expected and wished to take place. About a fortnight before his dissolution he was visited by the Rev. Mr. Milledollar, a Presbyterian minister, and the Rev. Mr. Cunningham. The latter gentleman said—"Mr. Paine, we visit you as friends and neighbours. You have now a full view of death; you cannot live long, and *whosoever does not believe in Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned*." —"Let me," replied Mr. Paine, "have none of your Popish stuff. Get away with you. Good morning, good morning." Mr. Milledollar attempted to address him, but he was interrupted with the same language. When they were gone, he said to Mrs. Hedden, an

Digitized by Google

elderly woman employed to wait upon him, "Don't let 'em come here again; they trouble me." Their pious anxiety soon prompted them to renew their visit, but Mrs. Hedden told them that they could not be admitted, and that she thought the attempt useless, for if God did not change his mind, she was sure no human power could. They accordingly retired.

This is but one amongst a number of attempts which were made during his illness to teaze or terrify him into an acknowledgement of the truth of doctrines, which in the former part of his life he had so ably combated. The men who had fled from the force of his arguments during his life-time, were the first to flock around him in his dying moments, thinking that, in the excess of bodily anguish, he might be induced to drop a word in opposition to his former opinions, or conceiving that, through their often repeated exhortations, he might be persuaded to subscribe to their system of faith. If these gentlemen were not on every occasion so politely received as they expected, they met with no more than they deserved; their intrusion at such a time was altogether an act of impertinence. Mr. Paine's

Digitized by Google

religion, was an affair which rested entirely between himself and his God, and it could receive no aid from the devotion of fanatics, or the piety of hypocrites.

For the last three weeks before his death, he suffered the most excruciating pain. His body was in many places covered with ulcers, and his feet with discoloured blisters, which baffled every effort to arrest their progress. He was at the same time labouring under a confirmed dropsy, attended with frequent cough and vomiting, and his decease was every day expected by those about him. In this deplorable situation, Mrs. Hedden frequently read the bible to him, but to this he paid no attention. With all this accumulation of corporal suffering, he remained perfectly sensible to the last. On the 8th of June, 1809, about nine in the morning, he expired, placidly, and almost without a struggle.

There does not appear to have been any person about him in his last moments, from whom an impartial account of his dying opinions could be expected. His surgeon, Dr. Manley, is the only one who has pretended to give any thing like a statement of the facts which took place during the latter part of his life, and

Digitized by Google

though this gentleman is a most decided advocate of the Christian religion, the whole of the account decisively proves, that Mr. Paine was a Deist to the last moment of his existence. The day before he died, he says, he purposely paid him a very late visit, with a view to ascertain the true state of his mind. After asking him several questions about his belief, without receiving any answer, he endeavoured to qualify the subject by saying—"Do you *wish* to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" After a pause of some minutes, he answered, "I have no wish to believe on the subject." These, Dr. Manley says, were the last words he uttered, and a more unequivocal evidence of the consistency of his opinions need not be adduced.

In addition to this, I have likewise received a Letter from a Friend, who is now a resident of New York, which, considering the respectability of the parties from whom he derived his information, will set the question finally at rest.

New York, Dec. 25th,
42nd year of Independence.

"SIR,

"I HAVE not been so diligent in searching after the true particulars of the death of Mr.

Digitized by Google

Paine as I should have been, were it not my opinion, that the story told of him refutes itself, at least to every reasonable mind, especially when related in those vehicles of trash and bigotry, the Evangelical and Baptist Magazines; however I have now collected a few facts which may not prove uninteresting.

"On Saturday the 20th instant, I visited the house where that great man Mr. Paine breathed his last: it is in Burrow Street, Greenwich, about two miles from the city of New York; Mr. Woodsmith and Mr. Sherwood are the present residents there; they both lived near Mr. Paine when he died, and were in the constant habit of visiting him during his illness. Mr. Sherwood stated, that the people who believed Mr. Paine died miserably were 'GROSSLY DECEIVED;' that he *never recanted* any of his opinions, that he never expressed sorrow at publishing any of his religious sentiments to the world, and that he believed they were just and irrefutable.

"I called on Dr. Manley (who attended Mr. Paine the last four months of his life) on the evening of the 23d instant. He said during our conversation, that all he knew was already before the public, in a letter he wrote, which was inserted in Cheetham's Life of Paine. The letter

Digitized by Google

read, occasionally explaining to me incidents that occurred during his visits; anecdotes that were told by Mr. Paine on the American and French revolutions, 'and,' added Dr. Manley, 'if I had acted as Boswell did with Dr. Johnson, I could have written a *famous history*.' I asked him plainly 'Did Mr. Paine recant his religious sentiments? I would thank you for an explicit answer, Sir.' He said, 'No, HE DID NOT;' I thanked him, and said it was my love of truth that impelled me to be thus particular, and that his letter was considered by many persons as positive proof of a recantation on the part of Mr. Paine. He said his letter did not justify such a conclusion; and added, 'I never said in my life that Mr. Paine recanted; but,' (continued Dr. Manley) 'I *think* that had Mr. Paine not been a conspicuous character, it is *likely* he would have changed his opinions.'* The expressions which Mr. Paine is said to have uttered when in the greatest agony, are denied by Mrs. Wordsworth, who, with her husband, occupied a part of the same house, and by Mr. Sherwood, and a Mr. Holden, who, previous to Mr. Paine's

* Dr. Manley having stated the fact as to what *did* happen, this guess-work sort of inference, about what *might* have taken place, is ridiculous.

Digitized by Google

illness, supplied him with liquor; I mention the liquor, as it is by many people believed he was a drunkard. Mr. Holden, with whom I am well acquainted, informs me, that he lived close to Mr. Paine for several months, and never saw him intoxicated; in fact, to use his own expression, 'It is a lie to say he is a drunkard.' Dr. Manley himself corroborates the statement, and says, 'While I attended him he never was inebriated.'

"Mr. Sherwood states, old Mrs. Heddon was anxious to be Mr. Paine's nurse, and that she was indirectly and artfully sent by a few PRIESTS to attend on him during his illness. That she was a religious bigot, is most certain, and likewise that she never let slip an opportunity of teasing Mr. Paine with her chattering tongue. I mentioned this to Dr. Manley, without giving an opinion, in order to see and hear how he treated the report of that mean transaction, worthy indeed of those, and those only who could condescend to propose, and advise an old, infatuated, superstitious woman, to enquire for the place of nurse to a man whom she believed to be an impious infidel. The Doctor said, Mrs. Heddon was a good and pious old lady—very constant in her devotions, and a good nurse; he did not *think*

Digitized by Google

she was requested to attend on him by those persons. I then pressed the circumstance upon his consideration, and he constantly avoided giving a direct negative, which to my mind was a tacit acknowledgement of the fact; he said afterwards he hoped the *reviewers* would not through his letter involve him in any dispute. The reason he mentioned this was, that I had spoken of the probability of our interview, and the subjects spoken of being published, to clear if possible from the minds of the credulous those false ideas which had been promulgated by interested priests, and others on the death of Mr. Paine.

"I could have sent you the testimony of Mr. John Hitt, Mr. Walter Morton, and Mr. Caron, in addition to the above, but I thought it best to get what information I could from persons whose names had not been introduced into any publication before, that we might have a variety of testimonies to the truth of what Mr. Walter Morton has published. Having thus given you what information I can collect on this important subject,

"I remain, Sir, &c.

"WILLIAM CLARK."

At nine o'clock on the morning of the 9th

Digitized by Google

of June, the day after his decease, he was removed from his house at Greenwich, attended by seven persons, to New Rochelle, where he was interred on his farm. A stone has since been placed at the head of his grave, according to the directions contained in his will, with the following inscription:

THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF

COMMON SENSE,

Died June 8th, 1809, aged 72 years and 5 months.

Thus died THOMAS PAINE, a man whose genius will ever deserve the applauses of literature, whose patriotism stands unrivalled, and whose writings have produced a greater effect upon the mental and physical condition of mankind, than those of any other writer that ever existed. In political enquiry he was without an equal, and in theological discussion he has laboured more efficiently than any other man to free the world from the trammels of intolerance, prejudice, and superstition. Of the merits of his writings, it is almost unnecessary to say more than has already been advanced in the preceding pages. His mind, like his principles, appears to have been in a continual state of maturity, his first and his last produc-

Digitized by Google

tions display the same strength of understanding, the same command of thought, and justness of conclusion. He is never too grave, nor too elate for his subject. With just a sufficiency of imagination to interest the feelings, he renders the discussion of the most dry and abstruse subjects an agreeable task, and pleases the fancy while he informs the mind of his reader. The occasional roughness of style which some have complained of, is the roughness of nature, and is a much better clothing for the boldness of his truths, than studied graces and polished periods. The dignity with which he writes upon almost every occasion will always command respect, even from his enemies, and if, in a few instances, a low sarcasm disfigures the beauty of the page, it is the fault of the subject and not of the writer. I cannot conclude this part of my observations better, than by a quotation from a work lately published by Elihu Palmer, entitled, "The Principles of Nature."

"The writings of Paine bear the most striking relation to the immediate improvement and moral felicity of the intelligent world. He writes upon principle, and he always understands the principle on which he writes; he reasons without logic, and convinces without

Digitized by Google

argumentation; he strangles error by his first grasp, and developes truth with much simplicity, but with irresistible force. He is one of the first and best of writers, and probably the most useful man that ever existed upon the face of the earth. His moral and political writings are equally excellent, and the beneficial influence of the principles for which he has contended, will be felt through all succeeding ages."

In his person Mr. Paine was somewhat above the middle size, being about five feet ten inches high, and rather athletic. His eye was quick and piercing, and his countenance altogether an index of his mind. In the earlier part of his life he was extremely neat and clean in his dress and person; in the latter part, as I have already observed, he was somewhat slovenly. His deportment was grave and dignified, when in the company of strangers, but in the society of his friends, it softened into an engaging easiness, and even playfulness of manners. His experience in life, his quickness of apprehension, and constitutional energy, peculiarly fitted him for conversation, of which he knew all the graces. His fund of anecdote was inexhaustible. In his behaviour he was modest, open, and respectful; his hu-

Digitized by Google

guage was vivacious, witty, or elegant, and equally happy upon grave or humorous subjects. I have, it is true, heard of some exceptions to the usual gentleness of his demeanour, but these principally occurred towards the latter part of his life, when his mind was harrassed by disappointment, neglect, and bodily disease, and were generally practised with a view to rid himself of the importunities of the bigoted, the interested, or the ignorant. He was compassionate both by nature and principle, and his behaviour in several instances is a proof that he was not revengeful. The most astonishing faculty of his mind was his memory. He could, as before stated, repeat every line of his writings at will, and as he had written upon such a variety of subjects, it frequently fell in his way to prove the strength of his recollection by recitations from his different performances.

That he was not without his failings is, however, a fact beyond dispute; and it would be an act of injustice to attempt to conceal them. These principally centered in the occasional intemperance of his habits during the latter part of his life, and it is not at all surprising that at his age, such habits were attended with a captiousness of temper, which rendered him

Digitized by Google

tiresome to those about him. This, however, was by no means a part of his natural disposition; it had its origin in causes which render the man an object of our regard, rather than our reproaches. It is the peculiar privilege of genius to command sympathy, and we ought not hastily to condemn its possessor, because his superiority of mind has not placed him entirely out of the reach of the common failings of human nature. But when we contrast these little weaknesses with the great and noble features of his character, they fade from the view, like the fogs of error before his own mighty powers of reasoning. I feel, however, I am saying more upon the subject than is necessary; his virtues are beginning to be felt, and the value of his writings to be properly appreciated; and though it may possibly require another generation to do him complete justice, I am perfectly satisfied that when the slaves who now revile him shall be mouldered into dust, the wisdom of succeeding ages will acknowledge the patriotism, and reverence the principles of PAINE.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

As the following productions have not been included in the edition of the author's works recently published, I have deemed it proper to insert them as an Appendix to his life. They are most of them exceedingly scarce, particularly the Letters to Dr. Goldsmith and Sir George Staunton.

TO

DR. GOLDSMITH.

HONOURED SIR,

HEREWITH I present you with the Case of the Officers of Excise. A compliment of this kind from an entire stranger may appear somewhat singular; but the following reasons and information will, I presume, sufficiently apologize. I act myself in the humble station of an officer of excise, though somewhat differently circumstanced to what many of them are, and have been the principal promoter of a plan for

Digitized by Google

applying to parliament this session for an increase of salary. A petition for this purpose has been circulated through every part of the kingdom, and signed by all the officers therein. A subscription of three shillings per officer is raised, amounting to upwards of £500, for supporting the expenses. The excise officers in all cities and corporate towns have obtained letters of recommendation from the electors to the members in their behalf, many or most of whom have promised their support. The enclosed case we have presented to most of the members, and shall to all, before the petition appear in the House. The memorial before you met with so much approbation while in manuscript, that I was advised to print 4000 copies: 3000 of which were subscribed for the officers in general, and the remaining 1000 reserved for presents. Since the delivering them I have received so many letters of thanks and approbation for the performance, that were I not rather singularly modest, I should insensibly become a little vain. The literary fame of Dr. Goldsmith has induced me to present one to him, such as it is. It is my first and only attempt, and even now I should not have undertaken it, had I not been particularly applied to by some of my superiors in office. I have some few questions to trouble Dr. Goldsmith

Digitized by Google

with, and should esteem his company for an hour or two, to partake of a bottle of wine, or any thing else, and apologize for this trouble, as a singular favour conferred on

His unknown
Humble servant and admirer,

Excise Coffee House, THOMAS PAINE.
Broad Street, December 21, 1772.

P. S. Shall take the liberty of waiting on you in a day or two.

TO

SIR GEORGE STAUNTON, BART.

Rotherham, Yorkshire,
May 25, 1789.

SIR,

As I know you interest yourself in the success of the useful arts, and are a member of the society for the promotion thereof, I do myself the pleasure to send you an account of a small experiment I have been making at Messrs. Walkers' iron works at this place. You have already seen the model I constructed for a bridge of a single arch to be made of iron, and erected over the river Schuylkill, at Phila-

Digitized by Google

delphia; but as the dimensions may have escaped your recollections, I will begin with stating those particulars.

The vast quantities of ice and melted snow at the breaking up of the frost in that part of America, render it impracticable to erect a bridge on piers. The river can conveniently be contracted to four hundred feet, the model, therefore, is for an arch of four hundred feet span; the height of the arch in the centre, from the chord thereof, is to be about twenty feet, and to be brought off on the top, so as to make the ascent about one foot in eighteen or twenty.

The judgment of the Academy of Sciences at Paris has been given on the principles and practicability of the construction. The original, signed by the Academy, is in my possession; and in which they fully approve and support the design. They introduce their opinion by saying,

"Il est sur que lors qu'on pense au projet d'une arche en fer de 400 pieds d'overture, et aux effets qui peuvent resulter d'une arche d'une si vaste étendue, il est difficile de ne pas éleve des doutes sur le succès d'une pareille enterprise, par les difficultés qu'elle presente au prémieré apperçu. Mais si telle est la disposition des parties, et la manière dont elles sont reunis qu'il result de cet assemblage *un*

Digitized by Google

tout trés ferme et tur solide, alors on n'aura plus les memes doutes sur la reussite de ce projet."

The Academy then proceed to state the reasons on which their judgment is founded, and conclude with saying,

"Nous concluons de tout ce que nous verrons d'exposer que la pont de fen de M. Paine est ingenieusement imaginé, que la construction en est simple, solide, et propre à lui donner la force necessaire pour résister aux effets resultans de sa charge, et qu'il merite qu'on en tente l'execution. Enfin, qu'il pourra fournira un nouvel exemple des application d'un métal dont on n'a pas jusqu' ici fait assez d'usage en grand, quoique dans nombre d'occasions il eut peut être employé avec plus grand succès."

As it was my design to pass some time in England before I returned to America, I employed part of it in making the small essay I am now to inform you of.

My intention, when I came to the iron works, was to raise an arch of at least two hundred feet span, but as it was late in the fall of last year, the season was too far advanced to work out of doors, and an arch of that extent too great to be worked within doors, and as I was unwilling to lose time, I moderated my ambition with a little *common sense*, and began with

Digitized by Google

such an arch as could be compassed within some of the buildings belonging to the works. As the construction of the American arch admits, in practice, of any species of curve with equal facility, I set off in preference to all others, a catenarian arch of ninety feet span, and five feet high. Were this arch converted into an arch of a circle, the diameter of its circle would be four hundred and ten feet. From the ordinates of the arch taken from the wall where the arch was struck, I produced a similar arch on the floor whereon the work was to be fitted and framed, and there was something so apparently just when the work was set out, that the looking at it promised success.

You will recollect that the model is composed of four parallel arched ribs, and as the number of ribs may be increased at pleasure to any breadth an arch sufficient for a road-way may require, and the arches to any number the breadth of river may require, the constructing of one rib would determine for the whole; because if one rib succeeded, all the rest of the work, to any extent, is a repetition.

In less time than I expected, and before the winter set in, I had fitted and framed the arch, or properly the rib, completely together on the floor; it was then taken in pieces and

Digitized by Google

stowed away during the winter, in a corner of a workshop, used in the mean time by the carpenters, where it occupied so small a compass as to be hid among the shavings, and though the extent of it is ninety feet, the depth of the arch at the centre two feet nine inches, and the depth at the branches six feet, the whole of it might, when in pieces, be put in an ordinary stage waggon, and sent to any part of England.

I returned to the works in April, and began to prepare for erecting; we chose a situation between a steel furnace and a workshop, which served for butments. The distance between those buildings was about four feet more than the span of the arch, which we filled up with chumps of wood at each end. I mention this as I shall have occasion to refer to it hereafter.

We soon ran up a centre to turn the arch upon, and began our erections. Every part fitted to a mathematical exactness; the raising an arch of this construction is different to the method of raising a stone arch. In a stone arch they begin at the bottom, on extremities of the arch, and work upwards, meeting at the crown. In this we began at the crown, by a line perpendicular thereto, and worked downward each way. It differs likewise in another respect. A stone arch is raised by sections of

Digitized by Google

the curve, each stone being so, and this by concentric curves. The effect likewise of the arch upon the centre is different, for as stone arches sometimes break down the centre by their weight, this, on the contrary, grew lighter on the centre as the arch increased in thickness, so much so, that before the arch was completely finished, it rose itself off the centre the full thickness of the blade of a knife from one butment to the other, and is, I suppose, the first arch of ninety feet span that ever struck itself.

I have already mentioned that the spaces between the ends of the arches and the butments were filled up with chumps of wood, and those rather in a damp state; and though we rammed them as close as we could, we could not ram them so close as their drying, and the weight of the arch, or rib, especially when loaded, would be capable of doing; and we had now to observe the effects which the yielding and pressing up of the wood, and which corresponds to the giving way of the butments, so generally fatal to stone arches, would have upon this.

We loaded the rib with six tons of pig iron, beginning at the centre, and proceeding both ways, which is twice the weight of the iron in the rib, as I shall hereafter more particularly mention. This had not the least visible effect on the strength of the arch, but it pressed the

Digitized by Google

wood home, so as to gain in three or four days, together with the dry and shrinking of the wood, above a quarter of an inch at each end, and consequently the chord or span of the arch was lengthened above half an inch. As this lengthening was more than double the feather of the key-stone in a stone arch of these dimensions, such an alteration at the butment would have endangered the safety of a stone arch, while it produced on this no other than the proper mathematical effect. To evidence this, I had recourse to the cord still swinging on the wall from which the curve of the arch was taken. I set the cord to ninety feet span, and five feet for the height of the arch, and marked the curve on the wall. I then removed the ends of the cords horizontally something more than a quarter of an inch at each end. The cord should then describe the exact catenarian curve which the rib had assumed by the same lengthening at the butments; that is, the rising of the cord should exactly correspond to the lowering of the arch, which it did through all their corresponding ordinates. The cord had risen something more than two inches at the centre, diminishing to nothing each way, and the arch had descended the same quantity, and in the same proportion. I much doubt whether a stone arch, could it be constructed as

Digitized by Google

flat as this, could sustain such an elevation; and, on the contrary, I see no reason to doubt but an arch on this construction and dimensions, or corresponding thereto, might be let down to half its height, or as far as it would descend, with safety. I say, "as far as it would descend," because the construction renders it exceedingly probable that there is a point beyond which it would not descend, but retain itself independent of butments; but this cannot be explained but by a sight of the arch itself.

In four or five days, the arch having gained nearly all it could gain on the wood, except what the wood would lose by a summer's drying, the lowering of the arch began to be scarcely visible. The weight still continues on it, to which I intend to add more; and there is not the least visible effect on the perfect curvature or strength of the arch. The arch having thus gained nearly a solid bearing on the wood and the butments, and the days beginning to be warm, and the nights continuing to be cool, I had now to observe the effects of the contraction and expansion of the iron.

The Academy of Sciences at Paris, in their report on the principles and construction of this arch, state these effects as a matter of perfect indifference to the arch, or to the butments, and the experience establishes the truth

Digitized by Google

of their opinion. It is probable the Academy may have taken, in part, the observations of M. Peronnet, architect to the King of France, and a member of the Academy, as some ground for that opinion. From the observations of M. Peronnet, all arches, whether of stone or brick, are constantly ascending or descending by the changes of the weather, so as to render the difference perceptible by taking a level, and that all stone and brick buildings do the same. In short, that matter is never stationary, with respect to its dimensions, but when the atmosphere is so; but that as arches, like the tops of houses, are open to the air, and at freedom to rise, and all their weight in all changes of heat and cold is the same, their pressure is very little or nothing affected by it.

I hung a thermometer to the arch where it has continued several days, and by what I can observe it equals, if not exceeds, the thermometer in exactness.

In twenty-four hours it ascends and descends between two and three tenths of an inch at the centre, diminishing in exact mathematical proportion each way; and no sooner does an ascent or descent of half a hair's breadth appear at the centre, but it may be proportionally discovered through the whole span of ninety feet. I have affixed an index which

Digitized by Google

multiplies ten times, and it can as easily be multiplied an hundred times: could I make a line of fire on each side the arch so as to heat it in the same equal manner through all its parts, as the natural air does, I would try it up to blood heat. I will not attempt a description of the construction; first, because you have already seen the model; and, secondly, that I have often observed that a thing may be so very simple as to baffle description. On this head I shall only say, that I took the idea of constructing it from a spider's web, of which it resembles a section, and I naturally supposed, that when nature enabled that insect to make a web, she taught it the best method of putting it together.

Another idea I have taken from nature is, that of increasing the strength of matter by causing it to act over a larger space than it would occupy in a solid state, as is evidenced in the bones of animals, quills of birds, reeds, canes, &c. which, were they solid with the same quantity of matter, would have the same weight with a much less degree of strength.

I have already mentioned that the quantity of iron in this rib is three tons; that an arch of sufficient width for a bridge is to be composed of as many ribs as that width requires; and that the number of arches, if the breadth of a

Digitized by Google

river requires more than one, may be multiplied at discretion.

As the intention of this experiment was to ascertain, first, the practicability of the construction, and, secondly, what degree of strength any given quantity of iron would have when thus formed into an arch, I employed in it no more than three tons, which is as small a quantity as could well be used in the experiment. It has already a weight of six tons constantly lying on it, without any effect on the strength or perfect curvature of the arch. What greater weight it will bear cannot be judged of; but taking even these as data, an arch of any strength, or capable of bearing a greater weight than can ever possibly come upon any bridge, may be easily calculated.

The river Schuylkill, at Philadelphia, as I have already mentioned, requires a single arch of four hundred feet span. The vast quantities of ice render it impossible to erect a bridge on piers, and is the reason why no bridge has been attempted. But great scenes inspire great ideas. The natural mightiness of America expands the mind, and it partakes of the greatness it contemplates. Even the war, with all its evils, had some advantages. It energized invention and lessened the catalogue of impossibilities. At the conclusion of it every man returned to

Digitized by Google

his home to repair the ravages it had occasioned, and *to think of war no more*. As one amongst thousands who had borne a share in that memorable revolution, I returned with them to the re-enjoyment of quiet life, and, that I might not be idle, undertook to construct a bridge of a single arch for this river. Our beloved general had engaged in rendering another river, the Patowmac, navigable. The quantity of iron I had allowed in my plan for this arch was 520 tons, to be distributed into thirteen ribs, in commemoration of the Thirteen United States, each rib to contain forty tons; but although strength is the first object in works of this kind, I shall, from the success of this experiment, very considerably lessen the quantity of iron I had proposed.

The Academy of Sciences, in their report upon this construction, say, "there is one advantage in the construction of M. Paine's bridge that is singular and important, which is, that the success of an arch to any span can be determined before the work be undertaken on the river, and with a small part of the expence of the whole, by erecting part on the ground."

As to its appearance, I shall give you an extract of a letter from a gentleman in the neighbourhood, member in the former parliament, for this county, who, in speaking of the

Digitized by Google

arch says, "In point of elegance and beauty, it far exceeds my expectations, and it is certainly beyond any thing I ever saw." I shall likewise mention, that it is much visited and exceedingly admired by the ladies, who, though they may not be much acquainted with mathematical principles, are certainly judges of taste.

I shall close my letter with a few other observations, naturally and necessarily connected with the subject.

That, contrary to the general opinion, the most preservative situation in which iron can be placed is within the atmosphere of water, whether it be that the air is less saline and nitrous, than that which arises from the filth of streets and the fermentation of the earth, I am not undertaking to prove; I speak only of fact, which any body may observe by the rings and bolts in wharfs and other watery situations. I never yet saw the iron chain affixed to a well-bucket consumed or injured by rust; and I believe it is impossible to find iron exposed to the open air in the same preserved condition as that which is exposed over water.

A method for extending the span and lessening the height of arches has always been the *desideratum* of bridge architecture. But it has other advantages. It renders bridges capable of becoming a portable manufacture, as

Digitized by Google

they may, on this construction, be made and sent to any part of the world ready to be erected; and at a time that it greatly increases the magnificence, elegance, and beauty of bridges, it considerably lessens their expence, and their appearance by re-painting will be ever new; and as they may be erected in all situations where stone bridges can be erected, they may, moreover, be erected in certain situations, where, on account of ice, infirm foundations in the beds of rivers, low shores, and various other causes, stone bridges cannot be erected. The last convenience, and which is not inconsiderable, that I shall mention is, that, after they are erected, they may very easily be taken down without any injury to the materials of the construction, and be re-erected elsewhere.

I am, Sir,

Your much obliged,

and obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS PAINE.

A LETTER

TO A FRIEND IN PHILADELPHIA.

Paris, March 16, 1790.

I LEAVE this place to-morrow for London: I go expressly for the purpose of erecting an iron bridge, which Messrs. Walkers, of Roth-

Digitized by Google

eram, Yorkshire, and I have constructed, and is now ready for putting together. It is an arch of one hundred and ten feet span, and five feet high, from the chord line. It is as portable as common bars of iron, and can be put up and taken down at pleasure, and is, in fact, rendering bridges a portable manufacture.

With respect to the French revolution, be assured that every thing is going on right. Little inconveniencies, the necessary consequences of pulling down and building up, may arise; but even these are much less than ought to have been expected. Our friend, the marquis, is, like his patron and master, General Washington, acting a great part. I take over with me to London the key of the Bastile, which the marquis intrusts to my care as his present to General Washington, and which I shall send by the first American vessel to New York. It will be yet some months before the new Constitution will be completed, at which time there is to be a procession, and I am engaged to return to Paris to carry the American flag.

In England the ministerial party oppose every iota of reformation: the high beneficed clergy and bishops cry out that the church is in danger; and all those who are interested in the remains of the feudal system join in the clamour. I see very clearly that the conduct

Digitized by Google

of the British government, by opposing reformations, will detatch great numbers from the political interests of that country; and that France, through the influence of principles and the divine right of men to freedom, will have a stronger party in England than she ever had through the Jacobite bugbear of the divine right of kings in the Stuart line.

I wish most anxiously to see my much loved America. It is the country from whence all reformation must originally spring. I despair of seeing an abolition of the infernal traffic in negroes. We must push that matter further on your side of the water. I wish that a few well instructed negroes could be sent among their brethren in bondage; for until they are enabled to take their own part, nothing will be done.

I am,

With many wishes for your happiness,

Your affectionate friend,

THOMAS PAINE.

ADDRESS AND DECLARATION.

AT a select meeting of the Friends of Universal Peace and Liberty, held at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's Street, August 20, 1791,

Digitized by Google

the following Address and Declaration to our fellow citizens was agreed on and ordered to be published.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

AT a moment like the present, when wilful misrepresentations are industriously spread by the partizans of arbitrary power, and the advocates of passive obedience and court government, we think it incumbent on us to declare to the world our principles, and the motives of our conduct.

We rejoice at the glorious event of the *French Revolution*.

If it be asked—What is the French Revolution to us?

We answer (as it has been already answered in another place*), *It is much* to us as men: much to us as Englishmen.

As men we rejoice in the freedom of twenty-five millions of our fellow men. We rejoice in the prospect which such a magnificent example opens to the world. We congratulate the French nation for having laid the axe to the root of tyranny, and for erecting government on the sacred HEREDITARY RIGHTS OF MAN—Rights

---

* Declaration of the volunteers of Belfast.

Digitized by Google

which appertain to ALL, and not to any one more than to another. We know of no human authority superior to that of a whole nation: and we profess and proclaim it as our principle, that every nation has at all times an inherent indefeasible right to constitute and establish such government for itself as best accords with its disposition, interest, and happiness.

As Englishmen we also rejoice, because we are *immediately* interested in the French Revolution.

Without enquiring into the justice on either side of the reproachful charges of intrigue and ambition, which the English and French Courts have constantly made on each other, we confine ourselves to this observation:—That if the court of France only was in fault, and the numerous wars which have distressed both countries are chargeable to her alone, that court now exists no longer; and the cause and the consequence must cease together. The French, therefore, by the Revolution they have made, have conquered for us as well as for themselves; if it be true that their court only was in fault, and ours never.

On this state of the case, the French Revolution concerns us *immediately*. We are oppressed with a heavy national debt, a burthen of taxes, and an expensive administration of

Digitized by Google

government, beyond those of any people in the world. We have also a very numerous poor: and we hold that the moral obligations of providing for old age, helpless infancy, and poverty, is far superior to that of supplying the invented wants of courtly extravagance, ambition, and intrigue.

We believe there is no instance to be produced but in England, of *seven* millions of inhabitants, which make but little more than *one* million of families, paying yearly SEVENTEEN MILLIONS of taxes.

As it has always been held out by all administrations that the restless ambition of the court of France rendered this expence necessary to us for our own defence, we consequently rejoice as men deeply interested in the French Revolution, for that court, as we have already said, exists no longer; and consequently the same enormous expences need not continue to us.

Thus rejoicing, as we sincerely do, both as men and Englishmen, as lovers of universal peace and freedom, and as friends to our own national prosperity and a reduction of our public expences, we cannot but express our astonishment that any part, or any members of our own government, should reprobate the extinction of that very power in France, or wish to see

Digitized by Google

it restored, to whose influence they formerly attributed (whilst they appeared to lament) the enormous increase of our own burthens and taxes. What, then, are they sorry that the pretence for new oppressive taxes and the occasion for continuing many old taxes will be at an end? If so, and if it is the policy of courts and court governments, to prefer enemies to friends, and a system of war to that of peace, as affording more pretences for places, offices, pensions, revenue, and taxation, it is high time for the people of every nation to look with circumspection to their own interests.

Those who *pay* the expence, and *not* those who *participate* in the emoluments arising from it, are the persons immediately interested in enquiries of this kind. We are a part of that national body on whom this annual expence of seventeen millions falls; and we consider the present opportunity of the French Revolution as a most happy one for lessening the enormous load under which this nation groans. If this be not done, we shall then have reason to conclude, that the cry of intrigue and ambition against *other* courts is no more than the common cant of *all* courts.

We think it also necessary to express our astonishment that a government, desirous of being called FREE, should prefer connections

with the most despotic and arbitrary powers in Europe. We know of none more deserving this description than those of Turkey and Prussia, and the whole combination of German despots. Separated as we happily are by nature from the tumults of the continent, we reprobate all systems and intrigues which sacrifice (and that too at a great expence) the blessings of our natural situation.—Such systems cannot have a national origin.

If we are asked, what government is?—We hold it to be nothing more than a NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, and we hold that to be the best which secures to every man his rights, and promotes the greatest quantity of happiness with the *least expence*.

We live to improve, or we live in vain; and therefore we admit of no maxims of government or policy on the mere score of antiquity or other men's authority, the *old* whigs or the *new*.

We will exercise the reason with which we are endued, or we possess it unworthily. As reason is given at all times, it is for the purpose of being used at all times.

Among the blessings which the French Revolution has produced to that nation, we enumerate the abolition of the feudal system of injustice and tyranny on the 4th of August,

Digitized by Google

1789. Beneath the feudal system all Europe has long groaned, and from it England is not yet free. Game laws, borough tenures, and tyrannical monopolies of numerous kinds, still remain amongst us; but rejoicing as we sincerely do in the freedom of others, till we shall happily accomplish our own, we intended to commemorate this prelude to the universal extirpation of the feudal system, by meeting on the anniversary of that day (the 4th of August) at the Crown and Anchor. From this meeting we were prevented by the interference of certain *un-named* and *skulking* persons with the master of the Tavern, who informed us, that on *their* representations he could not receive us.—Let those who live by or countenance feudal oppressions, take the reproach of this ineffectual meanness and cowardice to themselves. They cannot stifle the public declaration of our honest, open, and avowed opinions.

These are our principles, and these our sentiments. They embrace the interest and happiness of the great body of the nation of which we are a part. As to riots and tumults, let those answer for them who, by wilful misrepresentations, endeavour to excite and promote them; or who seek to *stun* the sense of the nation, and to lose the great cause of public good in the outrages of a misinformed mob.

Digitized by Google

We take our ground on principles that require no such riotous aid. We have nothing to apprehend from the poor; for we are pleading their cause. And we fear not proud oppression, for we have truth on our side. We say, and we repeat it, that the French Revolution opens to the world an opportunity in which all good citizens must rejoice—that of promoting the general happiness of man. And that it moreover offers to this country in particular an opportunity of reducing our enormous taxes.

These are our objects and we will pursue them.

J. Horne Tooke,
Chairman.

As Mr. Paine was not sufficiently versed in the French language to enable him to use it on public occasions, as the medium of conveying his opinions, he generally wrote down his sentiments when any important question was pending in the National Convention during the time of his being a member, and requested the President to suffer them to be read to the assembly. The following is a copy of his opinion delivered in this way, during the debate on the propriety of bringing Louis XVI. to trial. It was inclosed in the following letter to the President of the Convention.

Digitized by Google

Paris, Nov. 20.

"CITIZEN PRESIDENT,

As I do not know precisely what day the Convention will resume the discussion on the trial of Louis XVI. and, on account of my inability to express myself in French, I cannot speak at the Tribune, I request permission to deposit in your hands the inclosed paper which contains my opinion on that subject. I adopt this step with so much more eagerness, because circumstances will prove to what a degree it interests France, that Louis XVI. should continue to enjoy good health. I should be happy if the Convention would have the goodness to hear this paper read this morning, as I purpose sending a copy of it to London, to be printed in the English Journals."

The next day a secretary read the opinion of Mr. Paine, as follows:—

"I think that Louis XVI. ought to be tried; not that this advice is suggested by a spirit of vengeance, but because this measure appears to me just, lawful, and conformable to sound policy. If Louis XVI. is innocent, let us put him to prove his innocence; if he is guilty, let the national will determine if he should be pardoned or punished; but besides the motives which personally interest Louis

Digitized by Google

XVI. there are others which make his trial necessary. I am about to develope these motives, in the language which suits them, and no other. I forbid myself the use of equivocal expression or of mere ceremony. There was formed among the crowned ruffians of Europe a conspiracy, which threatened not only French liberty, but likewise that of all nations. Every thing tends to make it be believed, that Louis XVI. was the partner of that horde of conspirators. You have this man in your power, and he is at present the only one of the band of whom we can make sure. I consider Louis XVI. in the same point of view as the two first robbers taken up in the affair of the jewel office, their trial enabled you to discover the gang to which they belonged. We have seen the unhappy soldiers of Austria, and Prussia, and the other powers which declared themselves our enemies, torn from their fire-sides, and drawn to carnage as the the vilest of animals, to sustain, at the price of their blood, the common cause of crowned robbers. They loaded the inhabitants of those regions with taxes to support the expences of the war. All this was not done solely for Louis XVI. Some of the conspirators have acted openly: but there is reason to presume, that this conspiracy is composed of two classes of robbers; those who

Digitized by Google

have taken up arms, and those who have lent to their cause secret encouragement and clandestine assistance; and it is indispensible to let France and all Europe know all these accomplices.

"A little time after the National Convention was constituted, the minister for foreign affairs presented the picture of all the governments of Europe, as well of those whose hostilities were public, as of those who acted with a mysterious circumspection. We have already penetrated into some part of the conduct of Mr. Guelph, elector of Hanover, and violent presumptions affect the same man, his court and ministers, in quality of King of England.

"M. Calonne has constantly been favoured with a friendly reception at that court. The arrival of Mr. Smith, secretary to Mr. Pitt, at Coblentz, when the emigrants were assembling there; the recal of the English ambassador; the extravagant joy manifested by the court of St. James's at the false report of the defeat of Dumourier, when it caused it to be communicated by Lord Elgin, then minister of Great Britain at Brussels—all these circumstances render him extremely suspicious; the trial of Louis XVI. will probably furnish more decisive proofs.

"The long subsisting fear of a revolution in England, could, I believe, singly, prevent that

Digitized by Google

court from manifesting as much publicity in its operations as Austria and Prussia. Another reason could be added to this; the consequential decrease of credit, by means of which alone all the ancient governments could obtain fresh loans; for in proportion as the probability of a revolution increased, whoever should furnish towards the new loans must expect to lose his stock.

"Every body knows that the Landgrave of Hesse fights only as far as he is paid: he has been for several years in the pay of the court of London. If the trial of Louis XVI. could bring it to light, that this detestable dealer in human flesh has been paid out of the produce of the taxes levied on the people of England, it would be but doing justice to that nation, to inform them of that fact; it would at the same time give to France an exact knowledge of the character of that court, which has not ceased to be the most intriguing, ever since its connection with Germany.

"Louis XVI. considered as an individual, is an object beneath the notice of the republic; but when he is looked upon as a part of that band of conspirators, as a criminal whose trial may lead all the nations in the world to a knowledge and detestation of the disastrous system of

Digitized by Google

monarchy, and the plots and intrigues of their own courts, he ought to be, and must be tried.

"If the crimes for which Louis XVI. is arraigned, were absolutely personal to him, without reference to general conspiracies, and confined to the affairs of France, the motives of inviolability, that folly of the moment might have been urged in his behalf with some appearance of reason; but as he is arraigned not only on the part of France, but for having conspired against all Europe, we ought to use every means in our power to discover the whole extent of that conspiracy. France is now a republic: she has completed her revolution; but she cannot earn all the advantages arising from it, as long as she is environed with despotical governments; their armies and marine oblige her likewise to keep troops and ships in readiness. It is, therefore, her immediate interest, that all nations be as free as herself; that revolutions be universal; and since Louis XVI. can serve to prove, by the flagitiousness of government in general, the necessity of revolutions, she ought not to let slip so precious an opportunity.

"The despots of Europe have formed alliances to preserve their respective authority, and to perpetuate the oppression of nations; this is the end which they proposed to themselves, in

Digitized by Google

making an invasion on the French territory. They dread the effect of the French revolution in the bosom of their own countries; and in hopes of preventing it, they are come to try to destroy that revolution, before it should have attained its perfect maturity.—Their attempt has not been attended with success: France has already vanquished their armies; but it is left to her to sound the particulars of the conspiracy, to discover, to expose to the eyes of the universe those despots who had the infamy to take part in it; and the universe expects of her that act of justice.

"These are my motives for demanding that Louis XVI. be judged; and it is in this sole point of view, that his trial appears to me of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the republic.

"As to what regards inviolability, I would not have such a motive to be mentioned. Seeing no longer in Louis XVI. but a weak-minded and narrow-spirited individual, ill-bred, like all his colleagues, given, as it is said, to frequent excesses of drunkenness, and whom the national assembly raised again imprudently on a throne which was not made for him, if we shew him hereafter some pity, it shall not be the result of the burlesque idea of a pretended inviolability.

"THOMAS PAINE."

Digitized by Google

I have before had occasion to notice that absurd and contemptible production entitled "Cheetham's Life of Paine," and as the following correspondence will in some degree serve as a refutation of that work, its insertion here may not, perhaps, be considered unnecessary. It will likewise serve another and more important purpose, namely, that of shewing, without disguise, the opinion entertained by one of the most enlightened men of the age of Mr. Paine's writings and character. No person who reads the following letters, can accuse Mr. Barlow of any undue partiality towards the subject of them, and when we consider the relative situation in which the respective parties were placed, we must regard his account as one of the most interesting sketches which has hitherto appeared on the subject.

TO JOEL BARLOW.

SIR,

NOT having the honour of a personal acquaintance with you, the trouble this note will occasion will require some apology; and the only one I can offer regards the subject of it, and the readiness with which your character persuades me that you will furnish me the information

Digitized by Google

required as soon as your leisure permits you to do so.

I am preparing to write the life of Thomas Paine, author of Common Sense, &c. As you were acquainted with him in Paris, and as he mentions you in his "Age of Reason," your opinion of his manners and habits, the company he kept, &c. would be very acceptable.

He was a great drunkard here, and Mr. M——— a merchant of this city, who lived with him when he was arrested by order of Robespierre, tells me he was intoxicated when that event happened.

Did Paine ever take an oath of allegiance to France? In his letter to the French people in 1792, he thanks them for electing him a member of the Convention, and for the additional honour of making him a French citizen. In his speech on the trial of the King, he speaks, he says, as a citizen of France. There is some difference between being a member of a Convention to make a constitution, and a member of the same body to try the King and transact other business. I should imagine that in the latter capacities the oath of allegiance would be necessary.

Any other information you would be pleased to communicate, which in your judgment would be useful in illustrating his character, will

Digitized by Google

be gratefully received, and used as you may direct.

I am, &c.

JAMES CHEETHAM.

New York, July 21, 1809.

TO JAMES CHEETHAM.

SIR,

I HAVE received your letter calling for information relative to the life of Thomas Paine. It appears to me that this is not the moment to publish the life of that man in this country. His own writings are his best life, and these are not read at present.

The greatest part of the readers in the United States will not be persuaded as long as their present feelings last, to consider him in any other light than as a drunkard and a deist. The writer of his life who should dwell on these topics, to the exclusion of the great and estimable traits of his real character, might, indeed, please the rabble of the age who do not know him; the book might sell; but it would only tend to render the truth more obscure, for the future biographer than it was before.

But if the present writer should give us

Digitized by Google

Thomas Paine *complete* in all his character as one of the most benevolent and disinterested of mankind, endowed with the clearest perception, an uncommon share of original genius, and the greatest breadth of thought; if this piece of biography should analyze his literary labours, and rank him as he ought to be ranked among the brightest and most undeviating luminaries of the age in which he has lived—yet with a mind assailable by flattery, and receiving through that weak side a tincture of vanity which he was too proud to conceal; with a mind, though strong enough to bear him up, and to rise elastic under the heaviest load of oppression, yet unable to endure the contempt of his former friends and fellow labourers, the rulers of the country that had received his first and greatest services,—a mind incapable of looking down with serene compassion, as it ought, on the rude scoffs of their imitators, a new generation that knows him not; a mind that shrinks from their society, and unhappily seeks refuge in low company, or looks for consolation in the sordid, solitary bottle, till it sinks at last so far below its native elevation as to lose all respect for itself, and to forfeit that of his best friends, disposing these friends almost to join with his enemies, and wish, though from different motives, that he would haste to hide himself in

Digitized by Google

the grave—if you are disposed and prepared to write his life, *thus entire*, to fill up the picture to which these hasty strokes of outline give but a rude sketch with great vacuities, your book may be a useful one for another age, but it will not be relished, nor scarcely tolerated in this.

The biographer of Thomas Paine should not forget his methematical acquirements, and his machanical genius. His invention of the *iron bridge*, which led him to Europe in the year 1787, has procured him a great reputation in that branch of science, in France and England, in both which countries his bridge has been adopted in many instances, and is now much in use.

You ask whether he took an oath of allegiance to France. Doubtless, the qualification to be a member of the Convention required an oath of fidelity to that country, but involved in it no abjuration of his fidelity to this. He was made a French citizen by the same decree with Washington, Hamilton, Priestley, and Sir James Mackintosh.

What Mr. M——— has told you relative to the circumstances of his arrestation by order of Robespierre, is erroneous, at least in one point. Paine did not lodge at the house where he was arrested, but had been dining there

Digitized by Google

with some Americans, of whom Mr. M—— may have been one. I never heard before, that Paine was intoxicated that night. Indeed, (the officers brought him directly to my house, which was two miles from his lodgings, and about as much from the place where he had been dining.) He was not intoxicated when they came to me. (Their object was to get me to go and assist them to examine Paine's papers. It employed us the rest of that night, and the whole of the next day at Paine's lodgings; and he was not committed to prison till the next evening.)

(You ask what company he kept—he always frequented the best, both in England and France, till he became the object of calumny in certain American papers, (echoes of the English court papers) for his adherence to what he thought the cause of liberty in France, till he conceived himself neglected and despised by his former friends in the United States. From that moment he gave himself very much to drink, and, consequently, to companions less worthy of his better days.

It is said he was always a peevish inmate—this is possible. So was Laurence Sterne, so was Torquato Tasso, so was J. J. Rousseau;—but Thomas Paine, as a visiting acquaintance and as a literary friend, the only points of view in

Digitized by Google

which I knew him, was one of the most instructive men I ever have known. He had a surprising memory and brilliant fancy; his mind was a storehouse of facts and useful observations; he was full of lively anecdote, and ingenious original, pertinent remark upon almost every subject.

He was always charitable to the poor beyond his means, a sure protector and friend to all Americans in distress that he found in foreign countries. And he had frequent occasions to exert his influence in protecting them during the revolution in France. His writings will answer for his patriotism, and his entire devotion to what he conceived to be the best interest and happiness of mankind.*

This, Sir, is all I have to remark on the subject you mention;—now I have only one request to make, and that would doubtless seem impertinent, were you not the editor of a newspaper; it is, that you will not publish my letter, nor permit a copy of it to be taken.

I am, Sir, &c.

Kalorama, August 11, 1809. JOEL BARLOW.

* Mr. Barlow might have added, in regard to Mr. Paine's religion, that as it was the religion of most of the men of science of the present age, and probably of three-fourths of those of the last, there could be no just reason for making it an exception in his character.

Digitized by Google

The people of the State of New York, by the Grace of God, free and independent, to all to whom these presents shall come or may concern, send greeting:

Know ye, that the annexed is a true copy of the will of Thomas Paine, deceased, as recorded in the office of our surrogate, in and for the city and county of New York. In testimony whereof, we have caused the seal of said office of our surrogate to be hereunto affixed.—Witness, Silvanus Miller, Esq. surrogate of said county, at the city of New York, the twelfth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nine, and of our Independence the thirty-fourth.

SILVANUS MILLER.

THE last will and testament of me, the subscriber, Thomas Paine, reposing confidence in my Creator God, and in no other being, for I know of no other, nor believe in any other. I Thomas Paine, of the State of New York, author of the work entitled *Common Sense*, written in Philadelphia in 1775, and published in that city the beginning of January 1776, which awoke America to a Declaration of Independence on the fourth of July following, which was as fast

Digitized by Google

as the work could spread through such an extensive country; author also of the several numbers of the *American Crisis*, thirteen in all, published occasionally during the progress of the revolutionary war—the last is on the peace; author also of *Rights of Man*, parts the first and second, written and published in London, in 1791 and 92; author also of a work on religion, *Age of Reason*, part the first and second. N. B. I have a third part by me in manuscript, and an answer to the Bishop of Llandaff; author also of a work, lately published, entitled *Examination of the Passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called Prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and shewing there are no prophecies of any such person;* author also of several other works not here enumerated, *Dissertation on the first Principles of Government,—Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance,—Agrarian Justice*, &c. &c. make this my last will and testament, that is to say: I give and bequeath to my executors hereinafter appointed, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, thirty shares I hold in the New York Phœnix Insurance Company, which cost me 1470 dollars, they are worth now upwards of 1500 dollars, and all my moveable effects, and also the money that may be in my trunk or elsewhere at the time of

Digitized by Google

my decease paying thereout the expences of my funeral, IN TRUST as to the said shares, moveables, and money for Margaret Brazier Bonneville, wife of Nicholas Bonneville, of Paris, for her own sole and separate use, and at her own disposal, notwithstanding her coverture. As to my farm in New Rochelle, I give, devise, and bequeath the same to my said executors, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, and to the survivor of them, his heirs and assigns for ever, IN TRUST, nevertheless, to sell and dispose of the north side thereof, now in the occupation of Andrew A. Dean, beginning at the west end of the orchard, and running in a line with the land sold to —— Coles, to the end of the farm, and to apply the money rising from such sale as hereinafter directed. I give to my friends Walter Morton, of the New York Phœnix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, counsellor at law, late of Ireland, two hundred dollars each, and one hundred dollars to Mrs. Palmer, widow of Elihu Palmer, late of New York, to be paid out of the money arising from said sale; and I give the remainder of the money arising from that sale, one half thereof to Clio Rickman, of High or Upper Mary-le-Bonne Street, London, and the other half to Nicholas Bonneville of Paris, husband of Margaret B. Bonneville aforesaid: and as to the south part

Digitized by Google

of the said farm, containing upwards of one hundred acres, in trust to rent out the same or otherwise put it to profit, as shall be found most adviseable, and to pay the rents and profits thereof to the said Margaret B. Bonneville, in trust for her children, Benjamin Bonneville and Thomas Bonneville, their education and maintenance, until they come to the age of twenty-one years, in order that she may bring them well up, give them good and useful learning, and instruct them in their duty to God, and the practice of morality, the rent of the land or the interest of the money for which it may be sold, as hereinafter mentioned, to be employed in their education. And after the youngest of the said children shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years, in further trust to convey the same to the said children, share and share alike, in fee simple. But if it shall be thought adviseable by my executors and executrix, or the survivor or survivors of them, at any time before the youngest of the said children shall come of age, to sell and dispose of the said south side of the said farm, in that case I hereby authorise and empower my said executors to sell and dispose of the same, and I direct that the money arising from such sale be put into stock, either in the United States bank stock, or New York Phœnix Insurance company

Digitized by Google

stock, the interest or dividends thereof to be applied as is already directed for the education and maintenance of the said children, and the principal to be transferred to the said children, or the survivor of them, on his or their coming of age. I know not if the society of people called Quakers admit a person to be buried in their burying ground, who does not belong to their society, but if they do, or will admit me, I would prefer being buried there; my father belonged to that profession, and I was partly brought up in it. But if it is not consistent with their rules to do this, I desire to be buried on my farm at New Rochelle. The place where I am to be buried, to be a square of twelve feet, to be enclosed with rows of trees, and a stone or post and rail fence, with a head stone with my name and age engraved upon it, author of *Common Sense*. I nominate, constitute, and appoint Walter Morton, of the New York Phœnix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, counsellor at law, late of Ireland, and Margaret B. Bonneville, executors and executrix to this my last will and testament, requesting them the said Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, that they will give what assistance they conveniently can to Mrs. Bonneville, and see that the children be well brought up. Thus placing confidence in their friendship, I herewith take my

Digitized by Google

final leave of them and of the world. I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind; my time has been spent in doing good, and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my Creator God. Dated this eighteenth day of January, in the year one thousand eight hundred and nine; and I have also signed my name to the other sheet of this will in testimony of its being a part thereof.

THOMAS PAINE. [L. S.]

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the testator, in our presence, who at his request, and in the presence of each other, have set our names as witnesses thereto, the words "published and declared" first interlined.

WM. KEESE.
JAMES ANGEVINE.
CORNELIUS RYDER.

A List of Mr. Paine's Works, with the dates on which they were respectively published.

Case of the Officers of the Excise ..... p. 16 octavo
Introduction to the Pennsylvania Magazine, January 24, 1775 ..... 1 do.

Digitized by Google

To the Publisher of do. on the Utility of Magazines, no place, no date, Philadelphia, 1775, (supposed)	5 octavo
Useful and entertaining Hints on the internal Riches of the Colonies, Pennsylvania Magazine, Philadelphia, 1775	6 do.
Reflections on the Death of Lord Clive, Pennsylvania Magazine, (not seen)	—
New Anecdotes of Alexander the Great Penn. Mag. 1775	2
Common Sense, Philadelphia, Jan. 1776	56 do.
The Crisis, thirteen Numbers, besides several pieces under the title of "Supernumerary" and "Extraordinary Crisis," from Dec. 19, 1776, to Dec. 9, 1783, total pages	196 do.
Public Good, being an Examination of the Claim of Virginia to the vacant Western Territory, &c. Phil. 1780 ...	35 do.
Letter to the Abbe Raynal, Phil. 1782 ...	69 do.
Dissertations on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money, Philadelphia, 1786	54 do.
Prospects on the Rubicon, London, 1787	34 do.
Letter to Sir George Staunton, on Iron Bridges	14 do.
Letter to the Authors of the Republican, Paris, 1791	4 do.
Rights of Man, Part I. London, 1791 ...	98 do.
Address and Declaration of the Friends of Universal Peace and Liberty, at the Thatched House Tavern, London, August 20, 1791	7 do.

Digitized by Google

Letter to the Sheriff of the County of Sussex, June 30, 1792	4 octavo
Rights of Man, Part II. London, 1792 ...	122 do.
Letter to the Abbe Syeyes, 1792	2 do.
Letter to Henry Dundas, London, June 6, 1792	13 do.
Letter to Onslow Cranley, commonly called Lord Onslow, London, June 17, 1792	4 do.
Letter to Lord Onslow, London, June 21, 1792	3 do.
Address to the Addressers, London, Sept. 1792	46 do.
Letter to Secretary Dundas, on his Detention at Dover, Calais, Sept. 15, 1792.	3 do.
Letter to the People of France, (on his Election to the Convention,) Paris, Sept. 25, 1792	3 do.
Letter to the Attorney-General of England, on the Prosecution against him, Paris, Nov. 11, 1792	3 do.
Speech in the Convention on the Trial of Louis XVI. Paris, Nov. 20, 1792	6 do.
Reasons for preserving the Life of Louis XVI. Paris, Jan. 1793.	6 do.
Prospect on the War and Paper Currency, London, 1793	—
Age of Reason, Part I. Paris, Jan. 1794	52 do.
Dissertation on first Principles of Government, Paris, 1794	22 do.
Speech delivered in the Convention against the Constitution of 1795	6 do.
Agrarian Justice, Paris, 1796	18 do.

Digitized by Google

Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance, Paris, 1796	26 octavo
Letter to Geo. Washington, Paris, 1796	43 do.
Age of Reason, Part II. Paris, 1796 ...	96 do.
Letter to the Hon. T. Erskine, on the Prosecution of Williams, Paris, 1797	29 do.
Letter to the People and Armies of France, on the Events of the 18th Fructidor, Paris, 1797	52 do.
Discourse to the Theophilanthropists, Paris, 1797	8 do.
Letter to Camille Jourdan, occasioned by his Report on the Priests, Public Worship, and Bells, Paris, 1797	
Letters to the Citizens of the United States, Washington, 1802	34 do,
Letter to the English People, on the Invasion of England, 1804	11 do.
The Cause of the Yellow Fever, and the Means of preventing it, addressed to the Board of Health, in America, 1805	7 do.
Observations on the comparative Powers and Expense of Ships of War, Gun Boats, & Fortifications (supposed) 1806	6 do.
* Examination of the Prophecies, Essay on Dream, &c. New York, 1807	61 do.
An Essay on the Origin of Freemasonry, no date	12 do.

He wrote in addition to the foregoing, a number of essays for the American newspapers, which I have

* This has been erroneously entitled the third part of the Age of Reason.

Digitized by Google

hitherto been unable to obtain. He had likewise by him at the time of his death the third part of the Age of Reason, and a Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff's Apology for the Bible in manuscript. An extract, consisting of about fifteen pages, has already made its appearance, and it is understood the whole will ere long be published. His productions in poetry are numerous, but very few have appeared. Those which have been published are as follows:—

The Farmer's Dog.—Song on the Death of General Wolfe.—The Snow-drop and Critic.—Account of the burning of Bachelor's Hall.—Liberty Tree.—Verses on War.—Song to the Tune of Rule Britannia.—Lines occasioned by the Question, "What is Love?"—Epigram on a Long-nosed Friend.—On the British Constitution.—Story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.—A Commentary on the Eastern Wise Men.—Lines from "The Castle in the Air," to "The Little Corner of the World."

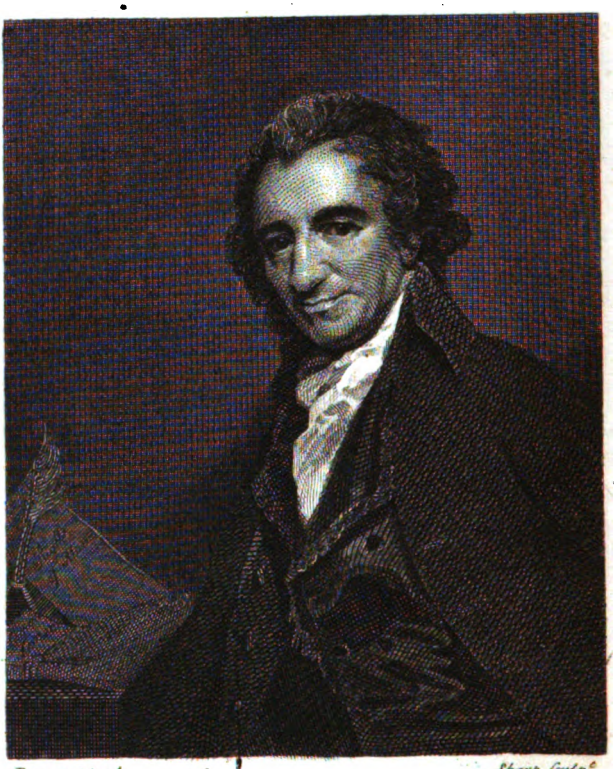
It is said upon good authority (see the extract from Mr. Yorke's Letters from France in the former part of the Life) that Mr. Paine had likewise composed a couple of volumes containing Memoirs, &c. of his own Life. Whoever may be possessed of these they are an invaluable treasure, and it is an act of injustice to the author to withhold them from the public.

THE END.

W. T. Sherwin, Printer, Lower Smith Street, Northampton Square.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Romney pinx.t *Sharp sculp.t*

THOMAS PAINE.

London Pub.d Feb.y 1794 by W.m Sharp N.o 3 Charles Street Midd.x Hosp.l

Digitized by Google

THE

LIFE

OF

THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF

COMMON SENSE, RIGHTS OF MAN, AGE OF REASON,

LETTER TO THE ADDRESSERS, &c. &c.

BY

THOMAS CLIO RICKMAN.

To counteract foul SLANDER's lies,
And vindicate the good, and wise,
Has been my only aim;
If skilless I've perform'd my part,
The error lies not with my HEART,
My HEAD 's alone to blame.

London:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THOMAS CLIO RICKMAN,
UPPER MARY-LE-BONE STREET;
AND TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1819.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

DEDICATION.

Celestial TRUTH! the guider of his pen
Whose Life I sketch, to THEE devoted solely
I dedicate my work; for who 'mongst men
Merits pre-eminence so pure, and holy?

O THOU! whose light enlarges every day,
May on the world thy full effulgence beam;
So PUBLIC RECTITUDE shall make its way,
So PRIVATE VIRTUE be no idle dream.

ORDER and BEAUTY follow in thy train,
And TASTE and HAPPINESS await on THEE;
Lift up thy voice aloud and all the VAIN,
And all the WRONG and all the FALSE shall flee.

Celestial TRUTH! thy blessings I implore,
Thy bright reward I seek, and seek no more.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THE two following letters are so explanatory of the reasons why the publication of the life of Mr. PAINE has been so long delayed, and are so well calculated to excite the candor of the reader towards the work, that no apology is offered for making them a part of the preface.

"*To the Editor of the Universal Magazine.*

[November, 1811.]

"ON MR. CLIO RICKMAN'S
"SUPPOSED UNDERTAKING OF THE LIFE OF
"THOMAS PAINE.

"SIR,

"THE public has been, within the "last year or two, led to expect a Life of the "celebrated THOMAS PAINE, from the pen of "Mr. CLIO RICKMAN, well known, on various

Digitized by Google

" accounts, to be more thoroughly qualified " for that task than any other person in this " country.

" This information, however, I repeat as I " received it, uncertain whether it came abroad " in any authenticated shape; and can only " add, that no doubt need be entertained of " sufficient attention from the public in times " like the present, to a well-written life of that " extraordinary character, whose principles and " precepts are at this moment in full operation " over the largest and richest portion of the " habitable globe, and which in regular process " of time may, from the efficacious influence " of the glorious principles of freedom, become " the grand theatre of civilization.

" I have often desired to make a commu- " nication of this kind to your Magazine, " but am particularly impelled thereto at this " moment, from observing in some periodical " publications devoted to political and religious " bigotry, a sample of their usual sophistical " accounts of the last moments of men who

Digitized by Google

" have been in life eminent for the independ-
" ence and freedom of their opinions; but the
" whole that the bigot to whom I allude has
" been able to effect in the case of Mr. Paine,
" amounts to an acknowledgment that the phi-
" losopher died stedfast to those opinions of
" religion in which he had lived; and the dis-
" appointment is plain enough to be seen, that
" similar forgeries could not, with any prospect
" of success, be circulated concerning Paine's
" tergiversation and death-bed conversion,
" which were so greedily swallowed for a
" length of time by the gulls of fanaticism
" respecting Voltaire, D'Alembert, and others,
" until the Monthly Review, in the real spirit
" of philosophy, dispelled the imposition.

" The late Life of Thomas Paine by Cheet-
" ham, of New York, gave rise to the above
" Magazine article. Cheetham humph! Now
" should it not rather be spelled CHEAT'EM,
" as applicable to every reader of that farrago
" of imposition and malignity, miscalled the
" Life of Paine.

Digitized by Google

" Probably it may be but a travelling name " in order to set another book a-travelling, for " the purpose of scandalizing and maligning " the reputation of a defunct public man, in- " stead of the far more difficult task of con- " futing his principles.

" Nothing can be more in course than this " conjecture, authorised indeed by the fol- " lowing fact, with which I believe the public " is, to this day, unacquainted; namely, that " Mr. Chalmers publicly at a dinner acknow- " ledged himself the author of that very silly " and insipid catchpenny, formerly sent abroad " under the misnomer of a 'Life of Thomas " Paine, by F. Oldys, of America.'

" The chief view of this application is " to ascertain whether or not Mr. Rickman " really intends to undertake the work in " question.

" I am, Sir, &c. &c.

" POLITICUS."

Digitized by Google

Universal Magazine, December 1811.

"MR. CLIO RICKMAN'S REPLY TO POLITICUS.

"Sir,

"If you had done me the favour of "a call, I would readily have satisfied all your "enquiries about the Life of Mr. Paine.

"It is true I had the memoirs of that truly "wise and good man in a great state of for- "wardness about a year ago; but a series of "the most severe and dreadful family distresses "since that time have rendered me incapable of "completing them.

"Tho an entire stranger to me (for I "have not the least idea from whom the letter "I am replying to came), I feel obliged to you "for the liberal opinion therein expressed of "me and of my fitness for the work.

"I have taken great pains that the life of "my friend should be given to the world as

Digitized by Google

" the subject merits; and a few weeks, when-
" ever I can sit down to it, will complete it.

" Unhappily, Cheetham is the real name
" of a real apostate. He lived, when Mr.
" Paine was my inmate in 1792, at Man-
" chester, and was a violent and furious ido-
" later of his.

" That Mr. Paine died in the full conviction
" of the truth of the principles he held when
" living I shall fully prove, and should have
" answered the contemptible trash about his
" death, so industriously circulated, but that
" the whole account exhibited on the face of
" it fanatical fraud; and it was pushed for-
" ward in a mode and manner so ridiculous and
" glaringly absurd, as to carry with it its own
" antidote.

" Such Christians would be much better
" employed in mending their own lives, and
" shewing in them an example of good man-
" ners and morals, than in calumniating the

Digitized by Google

" characters and in detailing silly stories of the
" deaths of those deists who have infinitely
" outstripped them, in their journey thro
" life, in every talent and virtue, and in dif-
" fusing information and happiness among
" their fellow men.

" I again beg the favour of a call, as the
" circumstances attached to the query of your's,
" and the delays and hindrances, which are of
" a family and distressing nature, to the pub-
" lication of Mr. Paine's life, are better adapted
" for private than public discussion.

" I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

" Clio Rickman."

It may not be necessary for me to premise any thing further than to say, that I affect not to rank with literary men, nor, as they rise, do I wish it; that authorship* is neither my

---

* See Preface to my "Poetical Scraps," 2 vols. where this subject is further enlarged on."

Digitized by Google

profession nor pursuit; and that, except in an undeviating attention to truth, and a better acquaintance with Mr. Paine and his life than any other man, I am perhaps the most unfit to arrange it for the public eye.

What I have hitherto written and published has arisen out of the moment, has been composed on the spur of the occasion, inspired by the scenery and circumstances around me, and produced abroad and at home, amid innumerable vicissitudes, the hurry of travel, business, pleasure, and during a life singularly active, eventful and chequered.

Latterly too that life has been begloomed by a train of ills which have trodden on each other's heel, and which, added to the loss of my inspirer, my guide, my genius, and my muse; of HER, the most highly qualified and best able to assist me, have rendered the work peculiarly irksome and oppressive.

In the year 1802, on my journey from France, I had the misfortune to lose my desk

Digitized by Google

of papers;—a loss I have never lamented more than on the present occasion. Among these were Mr. Paine's letters to me, particularly those from France in the most interesting years to Europe, 1792, 1793. Not a scrap of these, together with some of his poetry, could I ever recover.—By this misfortune the reader will lose much entertaining and valuable matter.

1819.

These memoirs have remained untouched from 1811 till now, and have not received any addition of biographical matter since. They were written by that part of my family who were at hand, as I dictated them; by those loved beings of whom death has deprived me, and from whom other severe ills have separated me. The manuscript, on these and many other accounts, awakens "busy meddling MEMORY," and tortures me with painful remembrances; and save that it is a duty I owe to the public and to the memory and character of a valued friend, I should not have set about its arrangement.

Digitized by Google

My heart is not in it. There are literary productions, which like some children, tho disagreeable to every body else, are still favorites with the parent: this offspring of mine is not of this sort, it hath no such affection.

Thus surrounded, and every way broken in upon by the most painful and harrassing circumstances, I claim the reader's candour; and I now literally force myself to the publication of Mr. Paine's Life, lest it should again be improperly done, or not be done at all, and the knowledge of so great and good a man be thereby lost to the world.

THE engraving of Mr. Paine, by Mr. Sharp, prefixt to this work is the only true likeness of him; it is from his portrait by Romney, and is perhaps the greatest likeness ever taken by any painter: to that eminent artist I introduced him in 1792, and it was by my earnest persuasion that he sat to him.*

---

* The large proofs of Mr. Paine sell at one guinea, and the large prints at half-a-guinea, to be had of the

Digitized by Google

Mr. Paine in his person was about five feet ten inches high; and rather athletic; he was broad shouldered, and latterly stooped a little.

His eye, of which the painter could not convey the exquisite meaning, was full, brilliant, and singularly piercing; it had in it the "muse of fire." In his dress and person he was generally very cleanly, and wore his hair cued, with side curls, and powdered, so that he looked altogether like a gentleman of the old French school.

His manners were easy and gracious; his knowledge was universal and boundless; in private company and among friends his conversation had every fascination that anecdote, novelty and truth could give it. In mixt company and among strangers he said little, and was no public speaker.

Thus much is said of him in general, and in this place, that the reader may the better bear us company in his Life.

---

publisher. The small ones, proofs at three and sixpence; and prints, at two and sixpence.

Digitized by Google

My dear friend,

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

I remain with
affection to you, your wife
and family — your friend,

Thomas Paine,

New York July. 12. '06.

Clio Rickman,

London.

Digitized by Google

LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE.

THE following memoirs of Mr. Paine, if they have no other merit, at least have that of being true.

Europe and America have for years been in possession of his works: these form the most important part of his life, and these are publicly sold and generally read; nor will the spirit of enquiry and sound reasoning, which the publication of them is so well calculated to promote, be long confined to any part of the world; for, to use his own words, "An army of prin-
"ciples will penetrate where an army of sol-
"diers cannot. It will succeed where diplo-
"matic management would fail. It is neither
"the Rhine, the Channel, nor the Ocean, that
"can arrest its progress. It will march on the
"horizon of the world, and it will conquer."

Digitized by Google

"What manner of man" Mr. Paine was, his works will best exhibit, and from these his public, and much of his private character will be best ascertained. But, as solicitude about the life of a great man and an extraordinary writer is common to all, it is here attempted to be gratified.

The Life of Mr. Paine by Francis Oldys* was written seventeen years before Mr. Paine's death; and was, in fact, drawn up by a person employed by a certain lord, and who was to have five hundred pounds for the job, if he calumniated and belied him to his lordship's and the ministry's satisfaction.

A continuation of this Life, printed at Philadelphia in 1796, is in the same strain as the above, and equally contemptible.

---

* "The Life of Thomas Pain, the Author of Rights of "Man, with a Defence of his Writings, by Francis Oldys, "A. M. of the University of Pennsylvania: — Dublin "printed." This silly and contemptible book against Mr. Paine and his writings, which was calculated every way to injure him and them, tells a falsehood in the title page, to secure its sale, by inserting in it, "with a Defence of his Writings."

Digitized by Google

A most vile and scandalous memoir of him, with the name of William Cobbett as the author, though we hope he was not so, appeared in London about the year 1795 with this motto:

" A life that 's one continued scene
" Of all that 's infamous and mean."

Mr. James Cheetham's Life of Mr. Paine, published at New York after Mr. Paine's death in 1809, is a farrago of still more silly, trifling, false, and malicious matter. It is an outrageous attack upon him which bears, upon the face of it, idle gossiping, and gross misrepresentation.

The critique on this Life, in the British Review for June 1811, consists of more corrupt trash about Mr. Paine than even Cheetham's book, and is in its style inflated and bombastic to a laughable excess. Whence this came, and for what purposes published, the candid will readily discern, and cannot but lament the too frequent abuse, both by the tongue and by the pen, of characters entirely unknown to those

Digitized by Google

who libel them, and by whom, if they were known, they would be approved and esteemed.

Indeed the whole of these works are so ridiculously overstrained in their abuse that they carry their own antidote with them.

The Life by Cheetham is so palpably written to distort, disfigure, mislead, and vilify, and does this so bunglingly, that it defeats its own purposes, and becomes entertaining from the excess of its laboured and studied defamation.

It is indeed "Guilt's blunder," and subverts all it was intended to accomplish. It is filled with long details of uninteresting American matter, bickering letters of obscure individuals, gossiping stories of vulgar fanatics, prejudiced political cant, and weak observations on theology.

It may be supposed, from my long and affectionate intercourse with Mr. Paine, that these

Digitized by Google

memoirs will have an opposite bias, and pourtray too flattering and exalted a character of him.

To this I reply, that I am not disposed to advocate the errors and irregularities of any man, however intimate with him, to suffer the partialities of friendship to prevent the due appreciation of character, or induce me to disregard the hallowed dictates of truth.

Mr. Paine was one of those men who,

> **Wise by some centuries before the croud,**
> **Must by their novel systems, tho correct,**
> **Of course offend the wicked, weak, and proud,**
> **Must meet with hatred, calumny, neglect.**

In his retirement to America, towards the close of his life, Mr. Paine was particularly unfortunate; for, as the author of the "Age of Reason," he could not have gone to so unfavorable a quarter of the world. A country, abounding in fanatics, could not be a proper one for him whose mind was bold, enquiring, liberal, and soaring, free from prejudice, and who from principle was a deist.

Digitized by Google

Of all wrath, fanatical wrath is the most intense; nor can it be matter of surprise that Mr. Paine received from great numbers in America an unwelcome reception, and was treated with neglect and illiberality.

It is true on his return to that country in 1802, he received great attention from many of those who remembered the mighty influence of his writings in the gloomy period of the Revolution; and from others who had since embraced his principles; but these attentions were not, by many, long continued.

Thousands, who had formerly looked up to Mr. Paine as the principal founder of the Republic, had imbibed a strong dislike to him on account of his religious principles; and thousands more, who were opposed to his political principles, seized hold of the mean and dastardly expedient of attacking those principles thro the religious feelings and prejudices of the people. The vilest calumnies were constantly vented against him in the public papers, and

Digitized by Google

the weak minded were afraid to encounter the popular prejudice.

The letter he wrote to General Washington also estranged him from many of his old friends, and has been to his adversaries a fruitful theme of virulent accusation, and a foundation on which to erect a charge of ingratitude and intemperance. It must certainly be confessed that his naturally warm feelings, which could ill brook any slight, particularly where he was conscious he so little deserved it, appear to have led him to form a somewhat precipitate judgment of the conduct of the American president, with regard to his (Mr. Paine's) imprisonment in France, and to attribute to design and wilful neglect what was probably only the result of inattention or perhaps misinformation; and under the influence of this incorrect impression he seems to have indulged, rather too hastily, suspicions of Washington's political conduct with respect to England. But surely some little allowance should be made for the circumstances under which he wrote; just

Digitized by Google

escaped from the horrors of a prison where he had been for several months confined under the sanguinary reign of Robespierre, when death strode incessantly through its cells, and the guillotine floated in the blood of its wretched inhabitants; and if, with the recollection of these scenes of terror fresh in his memory, and impressed with the idea that it was by Washington's neglect that his life had been thus endangered, he may have been betrayed into a style of severity which was perhaps not quite warranted, we can only lament, without attaching blame to either, that any thing jarring should have occurred between two men who were both staunch supporters of the cause of freedom, and thus have given the enemies of liberty occasion to triumph because its advocates were not more than mortal.

The dark and troublous years of the revolution having past away, and a government being firmly established, wealth possessed more influence than patriotism; and, a large portion of the people consisting of dissenters, fana-

Digitized by Google

ticism was more predominant than toleration, candour and charity.

These causes produced the shameful and ungrateful neglect of Mr. Paine in the evening of his days; of that Paine who by his long, faithful, and disinterested services in the Revolution, and afterwards by inculcating and enforcing correct principles, deserved, above all other men, the most kind and unremitting attention from, and to be held in the highest estimation by, the American people.

There were indeed a chosen and enlightened few, who, like himself "bold enough to be honest and honest enough to be bold," feeling his value, continued to be his friends to his last hour.

Paine was not one of the great men who live amid great events, and forward and share their splendour; he created them; and, in this point of view, he was a very superior character to Washington.

Digitized by Google

Far be it from me to derogate from the value of that great man; but it is presumed that he is more justly appreciated in the following epitaph, than in some longer essays towards characterizing him:

Important periods mark'd thy splendid life,
With tyrant men and tyrant means at strife;
Tho ne'er in Europe, yet thy well-earn'd fame
Throughout all Europe made revered thy name.
Thus far is true, but truth must further tell,
That lucky hits thy bright career befell;
Nor will thy shade this portraiture condemn,
That great events made thee, and not thou them.

Mr. Paine having ever in his mind the services he had rendered the United States, of whose independence he was the principal author and means, it cannot be matter of wonder that he was deeply hurt and affected at not being recognized and treated by the Americans as he deserved, and as his labours for their benefit merited.

Shunned where he ought to have been caressed, coldly neglected where he ought to have been cherished, thrown into the back

Digitized by Google

ground where he ought to have been prominent, and cruelly treated and calumniated by a host of ignorant and canting fanatics, it cannot be a subject of surprise, though it certainly must of regret, that he sometimes, towards the close of life, gave into the too frequent indulgence of drinking, neglected his appearance, and retired, mortified and disgusted, from an ill-judging, unkind, unjust world, into coarse obscurity, and the association of characters in inferior life.

In this place it is absolutely necessary to observe, that during his residence with me in London in and about the year 1792, and in the course of his life previous to that time, he was not in the habit of drinking to excess; he was clean in his person, and in his manners polite and engaging; and ten years after this, when I was with him in France, he did not drink spirits, and wine he took moderately; he even objected to any spirits being laid in as a part of his sea stock, observing to me, that tho sometimes, borne down by public and private

Digitized by Google

affliction, he had been driven to excesses in Paris, the cause and effect would cease together, and that in America he should live as he liked, and as he ought to live.

That Mr. Paine had his failings is as true as that he was a man, and that some of them grew on him at a very advanced time of life, arising from the circumstances before detailed, there can be no doubt: but to magnify these, to give him vices he had not, and seek only occasions of misrepresenting and vilifying his character, without bringing forward the great and good traits in it, is cruel, unkind, and unjust.

"Let those who stand take heed lest they fall."—They too, when age debilitates the body and mind, and unexpected trials and grievances assail them, may give into errors that they now vauntingly value themselves in not having. Singularly blest are they who are correct in their conduct; they should be happy and thankful that they are so; and instead of calumnia-

Digitized by Google

ting and being hard upon, should compassionate those who are not.

The throwers of the first stone would indeed be few if the condition were complied with on which it should be cast. That Mr. Paine in his declining years drank more than he should have done, and that he was a little tinctured with avarice, is in some measure true; but, to these errors of his old age, we ought to oppose his being the principal agent in creating the government of the American States; and that thro his efforts millions have now the happiness of sitting at ease under their own vines and their own fig trees; his fair and upright conduct thro life, his honest perseverance in principles which he might have had immense sums for relinquishing, or for being silent about, his never writing for money or making his works matter of pecuniary advantage to himself, but, on the contrary, as will be exemplified in these memoirs, his firmness in resisting all such emolument and in not listening to the voice of the briber.

Digitized by Google

Even amidst the violent party abuse of the day there were cotemporary writers who knew how to appreciate Mr. Paine's talents and principles, and to speak of him as he deserved.*

---

* There were also public meetings held, and addresses to him from Nottingham, Norwich, &c. &c. from the Constitutional Society in London, to which belonged persons of great affluence and influence, and some of the best informed, best intentioned, and most exalted characters. From these and from many other bodies of men were published the highest testimonies of thanks and approbation of Mr. Paine and his political works. These addresses and the resolutions of the public meetings may be seen in the papers and hand bills of the day.—We subjoin two from Manchester and Sheffield.

" MANCHESTER.—At a Meeting of the Manchester Constitutional Society, held this day, it was unanimously resolved,

" That the thanks of this Society are due to Mr. Thomas Paine, for the publication of " *his* Second Part *of the* RIGHTS OF MAN, *combining Principle and Practice*," — a work of the highest importance to every nation under heaven; but particularly to this, as containing excellent and practicable plans for an immediate and considerable reduction of the public expenditure; for the prevention of wars; for the extension of our manufactures and commerce; for the education of the young; for the comfortable support of the aged; for the better maintenance of the poor of every

Digitized by Google

" We are now," says one of these, " to " treat of a real great man, a noble of nature, " one whose mind is enlarged and wholely " free from prejudice; one who has most use-

---

description; and finally, for lessening *greatly*, and *without delay*, the enormous load of taxes under which this country at present labours.

" That this Society congratulate their countrymen at large on the influence which Mr. Paine's publications appear to have had, in procuring the repeal of some oppressive taxes in the present session of parliament; and they hope that this adoption of a small part of Mr. Paine's ideas *will be followed by the most strenuous exertions to accomplish a complete reform in the present inadequate state of the representation of the people*, and that the other great plans of public benefit, which Mr. Paine has so powerfully recommended, will be speedily carried into effect.

" THOMAS WALKER, President.

" Mar. 13, 1792. " SAMUEL JACKSON, Secretary."

" SHEFFIELD SOCIETY for Constitutional Information.

" This Society, composed chiefly of the Manufacturers of Sheffield, began about four months ago, and is already increased to nearly TWO THOUSAND Members, and is daily increasing; exclusive of the adjacent towns and villages, who are forming themselves into similar societies.

" Considering, as we do, that the want of knowledge and information in the general mass of the people, has exposed them to numberless impositions and abuses, the

Digitized by Google

" fully and honourably devoted his pen to
" support the glorious cause of general liberty
" and the rights of man. In his reply to Mr.
" Burke's miserable rhapsody in favour of op-

---

exertions of this Society are directed to the acquirement of useful knowledge, and to spread the same, as far as our endeavours and abilities can extend.

" We declare that we have derived more true knowledge from the two works of Mr. THOMAS PAINE, entitled RIGHTS OF MAN, Part the *First* and *Second*, than from any other author on the subject. The practice as well as the principle of government is laid down in those works, in a manner so clear and irresistibly convincing, that this Society do hereby resolve to give their thanks to Mr. Paine for his two said publications entitled 'Rights of Man,' Part 1st and 2d. Also

" Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Society be given to Mr. Paine for the affectionate concern he has shewn in his second work in behalf of the poor, the infant, and the aged; who, notwithstanding the opulence which blesses other parts of the community, are by the grievous weight of taxes rendered the miserable victims of poverty and wretchedness.

" Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Society be given to J. HORNE TOOKE, Esq. for his meritorious support of our lawful privileges, as a firm advocate of our natural and just rights, the establishment of an equal representation of the people.

" Resolved unanimously, That this Society, disdaining

Digitized by Google

" pression, popery, and tyranny, he has urged " the most lucid arguments, and brought for- " ward truths the most convincing. Like a " powerful magician he touches with his wand " the hills of error and they smoke; the moun- " tains of inhumanity and they melt away."

" Had Thomas Paine," says another most enlightened writer in 1795, in reply to Cheetham, Cobbett, Oldys, &c. " been nothing

---

to be considered either of a ministerial or an opposition party (names of which we are tired, having been so often deceived by both) do ardently recommend it to all their fellow citizens, into whose hands these resolutions may come, to confer seriously and calmly with each other, on the subject alluded to; and to manifest to the world, that the spirit of true liberty is a spirit of order; and that to obtain justice, it is consistent that we be just ourselves.

" Resolved unanimously, That these Resolutions be printed, and that a Copy thereof be transmitted to the ' Society for Constitutional Information in London,' requesting their approbation for twelve of our friends to be entered into their Society, for the purpose of establishing a connexion and a regular communication with that and all other similar societies in the kingdom.

" By order of the Committee,

" Mar. 14, 1792. " DAVID MARTIN, Chairman."

Digitized by Google

" superior to a vagabond seaman, a bankrupt " stay maker, a discarded exciseman, a porter " in the streets of Philadelphia, or whatever " else the insanity of Grub-street chooses to " call him, hundreds of thousands of copies of " his writing had never announced his name in " every village on the globe where the English " language is spoken, and very extensively " where it is not; nor would the rays of royal " indignation have illuminated that character " which they cannot scorch."

The following are the observations of Mr. Erskine, now Lord Erskine, when counsel for him on the prosecution against him for his work 'Rights of Man.' " Upon the mat- " ter, which I hasten to lay before you, can " you refuse in justice to pronounce, that from " his education, from the accidents and habits " of his life, from the time and circumstances " attending it, and from every line and letter " of the work itself and all his other writings " before and ever since, his conscience and " understanding (no matter whether errone-

Digitized by Google

" ously or not) were deeply and solemnly im-
" pressed with the matters contained in his
" book; that he addressed it to the reason of
" the nation at large, and not to the passions of
" individuals; and that in the issue of its influ-
" ence he contemplated only what appeared
" to him (though it may not to us) to be the
" interest and happiness of England, and of the
" whole human race? In drawing the one or
" other of these conclusions, the book stands
" first in order, and it shall speak for itself.

" Gentlemen, the whole of it is in evidence
" before you, the particular parts arranged
" having only been read by my consent upon
" the presumption that on retiring from the
" court you would carefully compare them
" with the context, and all the parts with
" the whole viewed together.

" You cannot indeed do justice without it.
" The most common letter, even in the ordi-
" nary course of business, cannot be read in
" a cause to prove an obligation for twenty

Digitized by Google

" shillings without the whole being read, that " the writer's meaning may be seen without " deception.

" But in a criminal charge only of four " pages and a half, out of a work containing " nearly two hundred, you cannot, with even " the appearance of common justice, pronounce " a judgment without the most deliberate and " cautious comparison. I observe that the " noble and learned judge confirms me in this " observation. But if any given part of a work " be legally explanatory of every other part " of it, the preface, à fortiori, is the most " material, because the preface is the author's " own key to his writing; it is there that he " takes the reader by the hand and introduces " his subject; it is there that the spirit and " intention of the whole is laid before him " by way of prologue. A preface is meant by " the author as a clue to ignorant or careless " readers; the author says by it to every man " who chooses to begin where he ought, " look at my plan, attend to my distinctions,

Digitized by Google

" mark the purpose, and limitations of the pur-
" pose, I lay before you. Let them, the ca-
" lumniators of Thomas Paine, now attend to
" his preface, where, to leave no excuse for
" ignorance or misrepresentation, he expresses
" himself thus: 'I have differed from some
" professional gentlemen on the subject of pro-
" secutions, and I since find they are falling
" into my opinion, which I will here state as
" fully but as concisely as I can. I will first
" put a case with respect to my law, and then
" compare it with a government, or with what
" in England is, or has been called, a consti-
" tution.'

" It would be an act of despotism, or what
" in England is called arbitrary power, to
" make a law to prevent investigating the
" principles, good or bad, on which such a law
" or any other is founded. If a law be bad,
" it is one thing to oppose the practice of it,
" but it is quite a different thing to expose its
" errors, to reason on its defects, and to show
" cause why it should be repealed, or why

Digitized by Google

" another ought to be substituted in its " place.

" I have always held it an opinion (making " it also my practice) that it is better to obey " a bad law, making use at the same time of " every argument to show its errors and pro- " duce its repeal, than forcibly to violate it; " because the precedent of breaking a bad law " might weaken the force, and lead to a dis- " cretionary violation, of those which are " good.

" The case is the same with principles and " forms of a government, or of what are called " constitutions, and the parts of which they " are composed.

" It is for the good of nations, and not for " the emolument or aggrandisement of parti- " cular individuals, that government ought to " be established, and that mankind are at the " expence of supporting it. The defects of " every government and constitution, both as

Digitized by Google

" to principle and form, must, on a parity of " reasoning, be as open to discussion as the " defects of a law; and it is a duty every man " owes to society to point them out: When " those defects and the means of remedying " them are generally seen by a nation, that " nation will reform its government or its " constitution in the one case, as the govern- " ment repealed or reformed the law in the " other."

Mr. Erskine further says, " In that great " and calamitous conflict, the American war, " Mr. Burke and Mr. Paine fought on the same " field of reason together, but with very diffe- " rent success. Mr. Burke spoke to a parlia- " ment in England such as Sir G. Saville de- " scribes it, that had no ears but for sounds " that flattered its corruptions; Mr. Paine, on " the other hand, spoke to a people, reasoned " with them, that they were bound by no sub- " jection to any sovereignty further than their " own benefits connected them; and by these " powerful arguments prepared the minds of

Digitized by Google

" the American people for their glorious, just,
" and happy revolution."

After this he very properly replies to those silly, heated people, who object to Mr. Paine's discussing the subject he so ably handles.

" A subject which, if dangerous to be dis-
" cussed, he, Mr. Burke, should not have led
" to the discussion: for surely it is not to be
" endured that any private man is to publish
" a creed for a whole nation, to tell us we are
" not to think for ourselves, to impose his own
" fetters on the human mind, to dogmatise at
" discretion, and that no man shall sit down
" to answer him without being guilty of a
" libel; I assert, that, if it be a libel to mistake
" our constitution, to support it by means that
" tend to destroy it, and to choose the most
" dangerous season for the interference, Mr.
" Burke is that libeller, but not therefore the
" object of a criminal prosecution; for whilst
" I am defending the motives of one man I
" have neither right nor disposition to crimi-

Digitized by Google

" nate the motives of others. All I contend for
" is a fact that cannot be controverted, viz.
" that this officious interference was the origin
" of Mr. Paine's book. I put my cause upon
" its being the origin of it, the avowed origin
" of it, as will abundantly appear from the
" introduction and preface to both parts, and
" throughout the whole body of the work; nay
" from the work of Mr. Burke himself, to
" which both of them are answers."

Even Mr. Burke, writing on one of Mr. Paine's works, 'Common Sense,' says, " that ce-
" lebrated pamphlet, which prepared the minds
" of the people for independence."

The following extract is from Mrs. Charlotte Smith's 'Desmond,' a novel, for matter and manner, equalled by few, and which for the excellent sentiments it inculcates is worthy the reader's attention.

" In reading the book you sent me, which
" I have yet had only time to do superficially,

Digitized by Google

" I am forcibly struck by truths that either
" were not seen before, or were by me, who
" did not wish to acknowledge them, carefully
" repressed; they sometimes are bluntly deli-
" vered, but it is often impossible to refuse
" immediate assent to those which appear the
" boldest, impossible to deny that many others
" have been acceded to, when they were spoken
" by men to whose authority we have paid
" a kind of prescriptive obedience, tho they
" now have called forth such clamour and abuse
" against the author of the 'Rights of Man.'
" My other letters from England are filled with
" accounts of the rage and indignation which
" this publication has excited; I pique myself,
" however, on having, in my former letter, cited
" against Burke, a sentence of Locke which
" contradicts, as forcibly as Paine has contra-
" dicted, one of his most absurd positions. I
" know that, where sound argument fails, abu-
" sive declamation is always substituted, and
" that it often silences where it cannot con-
" vince. I know too that where the politics
" are obnoxious, recourse is always had to per-

Digitized by Google

" sonal detraction; therefore wonder not that,
" on your side of the water, those who are
" averse to the politics of Paine will declaim
" instead of arguing, and those who feel the
" force of his abilities will vilify his private
" life, as if that was any thing to the purpose.
" I do however wonder that these angry anta-
" gonists do not recollect that the clamour
" they raise serves only to prove their fears,
" and that if the writings of this man are, as
" they would represent, destitute of truth and
" sound argument, they must be quickly con-
" signed to contempt and oblivion, and could
" neither be themselves the subject of alarm,
" or render their author an object of investi-
" gation and abhorrence; but the truth is,
" whatever may be his private life (with which
" I cannot understand that the public have
" any concern) he comes, as a political writer,
" under the description given of a controvertist
" by the acute author to whom Monsieur
" D'Hauteville has so terrible an aversion:—
" ' Was there ever so abominable a fellow?
" ' He exposes truth so odiously, he sets before
" ' our eyes the arguments on both sides with
" ' horrible impartiality; he is so intolerably

Digitized by Google

" ' clear and plain, that he enables people who
" ' have only common sense, to doubt, and
" ' even to judge.' *Voltaire.*"

It would be unjust to omit the testimony of so great a man as Mr. Monroe* in Mr. Paine's favour, especially as he knew our author thro many years, and was incapable of any thing less than a due appreciation of his character.

" It is necessary for me to tell you how
" much all your countrymen, I speak of the
" great mass of the people, are interested in
" your welfare; they have not forgotten the
" history of their own revolution, and the dif-
" ficult scenes through which they passed; nor
" do they review its several stages without
" reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility
" of the merits of those who served them in
" that great and arduous conflict. The crime
" of ingratitude has not yet stained, nor I
" trust ever will stain, our national character.

---

* Elected President of America in 1817.

Digitized by Google

" You are considered by them as not only
" having rendered important services in our
" own revolution, but as being on a more
" extensive scale the friend of human rights,
" and a distinguished and able advocate in
" favour of public liberty. To the welfare of
" Thomas Paine the Americans are not, nor
" can they be, indifferent."

But Paine is now dead, the test of time must prove him, and the reader will I hope be gratified that I add the elegant and very appropriate language of my brother-in-law, Mr. Capel Lofft.

" I have learnt that on the writings of men
" the grave is a severe and impartial critic;
" what deserves disesteem will have no long
" celebrity, but what has truth and social good
" for its principle, and has been the emanation
" of a powerful mind, under the influence of
" these motives has the germ of immortality;
" whatever of perishable frailty may adhere
" to it will soon drop into oblivion. The
" fleeting forms of error change in every ge-
" neration; a wrong is ever a confined and

Digitized by Google

" a capricious taste. Nothing will generally
" and permanently please that does not derive
" itself from an higher origin. It is needless
" therefore to inveigh against the dead, those
" especially who have been poor, and perse-
" cuted, and traduced through life. Such, if
" they merit shame and neglect with posterity,
" must of course meet it. These are no impo-
" sing circumstances to create a false homage.
" But if they have deserved the esteem, the
" gratitude, the affectionate veneration of suc-
" ceeding ages, no satire, no invidious exag-
" gerated selection of their faults will check
" their career. The licensed cry that marks
" the commencement of their triumph will be
" hourly fainter, and its last hollow murmurs
" will have expired without ever reaching that
" temple in which their fame, its solemn pro-
" gress completed, must reside, while aught of
" human glory beams on the earth from the
" awful shrine. If men, in other respects of
" wisdom and virtue, have so far forgotten
" themselves as to aid the cry, those tutelary
" powers leave at such a moment the side of
" those whom at other times they have most
" favoured. They add force to the sacred

Digitized by Google

" sound of just praise; the din of their con-
" stant enemies, the hasty and eager clamour
" of their erring friends sink, lost and un-
" distinguished, in the full harmonious ac-
" claim."

In the year 1795, in a letter to me Mr. Lofft thus writes, after objecting to the first part of the 'Age of Reason:' " I am glad Paine " is living: he cannot be even wrong without " enlightening mankind; such is the vigour of " his intellect, such the acuteness of his re-" search, and such the force and vivid perspi-" cuity of his expressions."

It has been a fashion among the enemies of Mr. Paine, when unable to cope with his arguments, to attack his style, which they charge with inaccuracy and want of elegance; and some, even of those most friendly to his principles, have joined in this captious criticism. It had not, perhaps, all the meretricious ornaments and studied graces that glitter in the pages of Burke, which would have been so many obscurities in the eyes of that part of the community for whose perusal his writings

Digitized by Google

were principally intended, but it is singularly nervous and pointed; his arguments are always forcibly stated, nor does a languid line ever weary the attention of the reader. It is true, he never studied variety of phrase at the expence of perspicuity. His object was to enlighten, not to dazzle; and often, for the sake of more forcibly impressing an idea on the mind of the reader, he has made use of verbal repetitions which to a fastidious ear may perhaps sound unmusical. But although, in the opinion of some, his pages may be deficient in elegance, few will deny that they are copious in matter; and, if they sometimes fail to tickle the ear, they will never fail to fill the mind.

Distinctness and arrangement are the peculiar characteristics of his writings: this reflection brings to mind an observation once made to him by an American girl, that his head was like an orange — it had a separate apartment for every thing it contained.

Notwithstanding this general character of his writings, the bold and original style of thinking which every where pervades them

Digitized by Google

often displays itself in a luxuriance of imagery, and a poetic elevation of fancy, which stand unrivalled by the pages of our english classics.

Thomas Paine was born at Thetford in the county of Norfolk in England, on the 29th of January, 1736. His father Joseph Paine, who was the son of a small reputable farmer, followed the trade of a stay maker, and was by religious profession a quaker. His mother's maiden name was Frances Cocke, a member of the church of England, and daughter of an attorney at Thetford.

They were married at the parish church of Euston, near Thetford, the 20th of June, 1734.

His father, by this marriage out of the society of quakers, was disowned by that community.

Mr. Paine received his education at the grammar school at Thetford, under the Revd. Wm. Knowles, master; and one of his school-

Digitized by Google

mates at that time was the late counsellor Mingay.

He gave very early indication of talents and strong abilities, and addicted himself, when a mere boy, to reading poetical authors; but this disposition his parents endeavoured to discourage.

When a child he composed some lines on a fly being caught in a spider's web, and produced, when eight years of age, the following epitaph on a crow which he buried in the garden: —

Here lies the body of John Crow,
Who once was high but now is low;
Ye brother Crows take warning all,
For as you rise, so must you fall.

At this school his studies were directed merely to the useful branches of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and he left it at thirteen years of age, applying, tho he did not like it, to his father's business for nearly five years.

In the year 1756, when about twenty years

Digitized by Google

of age, he went to London, where he worked some time in Hanover Street, Long Acre, with Mr. Morris, a noted stay maker.

He continued but a short time in London, and it is probable about this time made his seafaring adventure of which he thus speaks: "At an early age, raw and adventurous, and "heated with the false heroism of a master "[Revd. Mr. Knowles, master of the grammar "school at Thetford] who had served in a man "of war, I began my fortune, and entered on "board the Terrible, Captain Death. From "this adventure I was happily prevented by "the affectionate and moral remonstrances of a "good father, who from the habits of his life, "being of the quaker profession, looked on "me as lost; but the impression, much as it "affected me at the time, wore away, and I "entered afterwards in the King of Prussia "privateer, Captain Mender, and went with her "to sea."

This way of life Mr. Paine soon left, and about the year 1758 worked at his trade for near twelve months at Dover. In April 1759

Digitized by Google

he settled as a master stay maker at Sandwich; and the 27th of September following married Mary Lambert, the daughter of an exciseman of that place. In April 1760, he removed with his wife to Margate, where she died shortly after, and he again mingled with the crouds of London.

In July 1761, disgusted with the toil and little gain of his late occupation, he renounced it for ever, and determined to apply himself to the profession of an exciseman, towards which, as his wife's father was of that calling, he had some time turned his thoughts.

At this period he sought shelter under his father's roof at Thetford, that he might prosecute, in quiet and retirement, the object of his future course. Through the interest of Mr. Cocksedge, the recorder of Thetford, after fourteen months of study, he was established as a supernumerary in the excise, about the age of twenty-five.

In this situation at Grantham and Alford, &c. he did not continue more than two or

Digitized by Google

three years, when he relinquished it in August 1765, and commenced it again in July 1766.

In this interval he was teacher at Mr. Noble's academy in Leman Street, Goodman's Fields, at a salary of £25 a year. In a similar occupation he afterwards lived for a short time, at Kensington, with a Mr. Gardner.

I remember when once speaking of the improvement he gained in the above capacities and some other lowly situations he had been in, he made this observation: "Here I derived "considerable information; indeed I have sel- "dom passed five minutes of my life, how- "ever circumstanced, in which I did not ac- "quire some knowledge."

During this residence in London Mr. Paine attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became acquainted with Dr. Bevis of the Temple, a great astronomer. In these studies and in the mathematics he soon became a proficient.

In March 1768 he was settled as an excise-

Digitized by Google

man at Lewes, in Sussex, and there, on the 26th of March 1771, married Elizabeth Ollive, shortly after the death of her father, whose trade of a tobacconist and grocer he entered into and carried on.

In this place he lived several years in habits of intimacy with a very respectable, sensible, and convivial set of acquaintance, who were entertained with his witty sallies, and informed by his more serious conversations.

In politics he was at this time a Whig, and notorious for that quality which has been defined perseverance in a good cause and obstinacy in a bad one. He was tenacious of his opinions, which were bold, acute, and independent, and which he maintained with ardour, elegance, and argument.

At this period, at Lewes, the White Hart evening club was the resort of a social and intelligent circle who, out of fun, seeing that disputes often ran very warm and high, frequently had what they called the 'Headstrong Book.' This was no other than an old Greek

Digitized by Google

Homer which was sent the morning after a debate vehemently maintained, to the most obstinate haranguer of the Club: this book had the following title, as implying that Mr. Paine the best deserved and the most frequently obtained it.

THE

HEADSTRONG BOOK,

OR

ORIGINAL BOOK OF OBSTINACY,

WRITTEN BY

***** ****, OF LEWES, IN SUSSEX,

AND REVISED AND CORRECTED BY

THOMAS PAINE.

EULOGY ON PAINE.

Immortal PAINE, while mighty reasoners jar,
We crown thee General of the Headstrong War;
Thy logic vanquish'd error, and thy mind
No bounds, but those of right and truth, confined.
Thy soul of fire must sure ascend the sky,
Immortal PAINE, thy fame can never die;
For men like thee their names must ever save
From the black edicts of the tyrant grave.

Digitized by Google

My friend Mr. Lee, of Lewes, in communicating this to me in September 1810, said "This was manufactured nearly forty years ago, "as applicable to Mr. Paine, and I believe you "will allow, however indifferent the manner, "that I did not very erroneously anticipate "his future celebrity."

During his residence at Lewes, he wrote several excellent little pieces in prose and verse, and among the rest the celebrated song on the death of General Wolfe, beginning

In a mouldering cave where the wretched retreat*—

It was about this time he wrote "The Trial of Farmer Carter's Dog Porter," in the manner of a drama, a work of exquisite wit and humour.

In 1772 the excise officers throughout the kingdom formed a design of applying to parliament for some addition to their salaries.

---

* This and other of Mr. Paine's poetical effusions, the reader will find at the close of this work.

Digitized by Google

Upon this occasion Mr. Paine, who by this time was distinguished amongst them as a man of talent, was fixed upon as a fit person, and solicited to draw up their case, and this he did in a very succinct and masterly manner. This case makes an octavo pamphlet, and four thousand copies were printed by Mr. Wm. Lee of Lewes: it is entitled "The Case of the Salary of the Officers of Excise, and Thoughts on the Corruption arising from the Poverty of Excise Officers." No application, however, notwithstanding this effort, was made to parliament.

In April 1774 the goods of his shop were sold to pay his debts.

As a grocer, he trafficked in exciseable articles, and being suspected of unfair practices was dismissed the excise after being in it twelve years. Whether this reason was a just one or not never was ascertained: it was however the ostensible one.

Mr. Paine might perhaps have been in the habit of smuggling, in common with his neigh-

Digitized by Google

bours; it was the universal custom along the coast, and more or less the practice of all ranks of people, from lords and ladies, ministers and magistrates, down to the cottager and labourer.

I cannot, while upon this subject, resist the republication of a letter of mine in October 1807

" To the Editor of the Independent Whig."

" Sir,

" If there are any characters more to be abhorred than others, it is those who inflict severe punishments against offenders and yet themselves commit the same crimes.

" If any characters more than others deserve execration, exposure, and to be driven from among mankind, it is those governors of the people who break the laws they themselves make, and punish others for breaking.

" Suffer me, Mr. Editor, thus to preface the following fact; fact I say, because I stand ready to prove it so.

Digitized by Google

" When Admiral Duncan rendezvoused in the Downs with his fleet on the 8th of January 1806, the Spider lugger, Daniel Falara, master, was sent to Guernsey to smuggle articles for the fleet, such as wine, spirits, hair powder, playing cards, tobacco, &c. for the supply of the different ships.

" At her arrival in the Downs, the ships' boats flocked round her to unload her and her contraband cargo. A custom-house extra boat commanded by William Wallace, seeing the lugger, followed and took her; in doing which he did his duty.

" On his inspecting the smuggled articles with which she was laden, he found a number of cases directed to Admiral Duncan, the Right Honble William Pitt, the heaven-born minister of England, and to the Right Honble Henry Dundas, Walmer Castle. In a few days, Wallace, the master of the custom-house cutter, received orders from government to give the lugger and her smuggled cargo up, on penalty of being dismissed the service, and these cases of smuggled goods were afterwards delivered

Digitized by Google

at the prime minister's, Mr. Pitt's, at Walmer Castle.

" Mr. Editor, read what follows, and repress your indignation if you can.

" There are now in Deal jail fourteen persons for trifling acts of smuggling compared to the above of the Right Honble William Pitt and the now Right Honble Lord Melville.

" The former were poor, and knew not how to live, the latter were most affluently and splendidly supported by the people; that is, they were paupers upon the generous public, towards whom they thus scandalously and infamously conducted themselves.

" I am, Sir,

" Your humble servant,

" CLIO RICKMAN."

As Mr. Paine's being dismissed the excise has been a favorite theme with his abusers it may be necessary here to relate the following fact.

Digitized by Google

At the time he was an exciseman at Lewes, he was so approved for doing his duty that Mr. Jenner, principal clerk in the Excise Office, London, had several times occasion to write letters from the Board of Excise thanking Mr. Paine for his assiduity in his profession, and for his information and calculations forwarded to the office.

In May following Mr. Paine and his wife separated by mutual agreement; articles of which were finally settled on the 4th of June. Which of them was in this instance in the wrong, or whether either of them was so, must be left undetermined; as on this subject no knowledge or judgment can be formed. They are now both removed, where, as we are told, none "are either married or given in marriage," and where, consequently, there can be no disagreements on this score.

This I can assert, that Mr. Paine always spoke tenderly and respectfully of his wife; and sent her several times pecuniary aid, without her knowing even whence it came.

Digitized by Google

So much has however been said on Mr. Paine having never cohabited with Miss Ollive, whom he married at Lewes, that if I were entirely to omit any mention of it, I might be charged with doing so because afraid to meet the subject, which forms, indeed, a very singular part of Mr. Paine's history.

That he did not cohabit with her from the moment they left the altar till the day of their separation, a space of three years, although they lived in the same house together, is an indubitable truth. It is also true, that no physical defect, on the part of Mr. Paine, can be adduced as a reason for such conduct.

I have in my possession the letters and documents on this subject,— Mr. Francis Wheeler's letters from Lewes of April 16, 1774, to Mr. Philip Moore, proctor in the Commons, and his reply of April 18, 1774; and from Dr. Manning of Lewes I have frequently heard a candid detail of the circumstances.

Well, of this curious fact in Mr. Paine's life, what is to be said? To make use of it

Digitized by Google

as a subject of reproach, abuse, and calumny, is absurd: it is one of those things in human life upon which we cannot come to any decision, and which might have been honourable as well as dishonourable to Mr. Paine, I think most probably the former, could every why and wherefore be known. But as this cannot be, the fact, for a fact it is, must be left for the reader's reflection; and I dare say if he is a candid one, it is not the only circumstance in life which he cannot understand, and upon which therefore he should not decide uncharitably.

Mr. Paine's answer upon my once referring to this subject was, "It is nobody's business "but my own: I had cause for it, but I will "name it to no one."

Towards the end of this year, 1774, he was strongly recommended to the great and good Dr. Franklin, "the favour of whose friend-"ship," he says, "I possessed in England, and "my introduction to this part of the world "[America] was thro his patronage."*

---

* Crisis, No. 3.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Paine now formed the resolution of quitting his native country, and soon crossed the Atlantic; and, as he himself relates, arrived at Philadelphia in the winter, a few months before the battle of Lexington, which was fought in April 1775.

It appears that his first employment in the New World was with Mr. Aitkin a bookseller, as editor of the Pennsylvanian Magazine; and his introduction to that work, dated January 24th, 1775, is thus concluded: "Thus encom-
" passed with difficulties, this first number of
" the Pennsylvanian Magazine entreats a favor-
" able reception; of which we shall only say,
" that like the early snow-drop it comes forth
" in a barren season, and contents itself with
" foretelling the reader that choicer flowers
" are preparing to appear."

The following letter from Dr. Rush of Philadelphia it is presumed may not improperly be given here; but it should be remarked that this letter was written as late as July 1809, on purpose to be inserted in Cheetham's infamous Life of Mr. Paine, and under some prejudices,

Digitized by Google

as appears on the face of it, as well as at a period when every misrepresentation and calumny had been excited against him.

" Philadelphia, July 17, 1809.

" Sir,

" In compliance with your request, I send you herewith answers to your questions relative to the late Thomas Paine.

" He came to Philadelphia in the year 1772* with a short letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin, to one of his friends.

" His design was to open a school for the instruction of young ladies, in several branches of knowledge, which at that time was seldom taught in the schools of our country.

" About the year 1773,† I met him acci-

---

* Dr. Rush is mistaken—it was 1774.

† 1775.

Digitized by Google

dentally in Mr. Aitkin's book-store, and was introduced to him by Mr. Aitkin. We conversed a few minutes, when I left. Soon afterwards I read a short essay with which I was much pleased, in one of Bradford's papers, against the slavery of the Africans in our country, and which I was informed was written by Mr. Paine. This excited my desire to be better acquainted with him. We met soon after this in Mr. Aitkin's book-store, where I did homage to his principles, and pen, upon the subject of the enslaved Africans.

" After this, Mr. Aitkin employed him as the editor of his Magazine, with a salary of £25 currency a year. This work was well supported by him. His song upon the death of General Wolfe, and his reflections upon the death of Lord Clive, gave it a sudden currency which few works of that kind have since had in our country.

" When the subject of American independence began to be agitated in general conversation, I observed the public mind to be loaded with an immense mass of prejudice and error

Digitized by Google

relative to it. Something appeared to be wanting to move them, beyond the ordinary short and cold addresses of newspaper publications.

" At this time I called upon Mr. Paine, and suggested to him the propriety of preparing our citizens for a perpetual separation of our country from Great Britain, by means of a work of such length, as would obviate all the objections to it.* He seized the idea with avidity, and immediately began his famous pamphlet in favour of that measure. He read the sheets to me at my house, as he composed them. When he had finished them, I advised him to put them into the hands of Dr. Franklin, Samuel Adams, and the late Judge Wilson; assuring him at the same time, that they held the same opinion that he had defended.

" The first of those gentlemen, and I be-

---

* I have always understood and still believe that this suggestion came originally from Mr. Paine himself; indeed Doctor Rush's letter is all through a little egotistical, and from the close of it, it may be seen he was also a man of prejudice.

Digitized by Google

lieve the second, saw the manuscript; but Judge Wilson being from home when Mr. Paine called upon him, it was not subjected to his inspection. No addition was made to it by Dr. Franklin, but a passage was struck out, or omitted, in the printing it, which I conceive to be one of the most striking in it: it was the following: 'A greater absurdity cannot 'be conceived than three millions of people 'running to their sea-coast every time a ship 'arrives from London, to know what portion 'of liberty they should enjoy.'

"A title only was wanted for this pamphlet before it was committed to press. Mr. Paine proposed to call it 'Plain Truth:' I objected to it, and suggested the title of 'Common Sense.' This was instantly adopted, and nothing now remained but to find a printer who had boldness enough to publish it. At that time there was a certain Robert Bell, an intelligent Scotch printer and bookseller in Philadelphia, whom I knew to be as high toned as Mr. Paine upon the subject of American independence. I mentioned the pamphlet to him, and he at once consented to run the risk of publishing

Digitized by Google

it. The author and the printer were immediately brought together, and 'Common Sense' burst from the press of the latter in a few days with an effect which has been rarely produced by types and paper in any age or country.

"Between the time of the publication of this pamphlet and the 4th of July 1776, Mr. Paine published a number of essays in Mr. Bradford's paper under the signature of 'The Forester,' in defence of the opinions contained in his 'Common Sense.'

"In the summer and autumn of 1776 he served as a volunteer in the American war under General Washington. Whether he received pay and rations I cannot tell. He lived a good deal with the officers of the first rank in the army, at whose tables his 'Common Sense' always made him a welcome guest. The legislature of Pennsylvania gave Mr. Paine £500 as an acknowledgment of the services he had rendered the United States by his publications.

"He acted as clerk to the legislature of Penn-

Digitized by Google

sylvania about the year 1780. I do not know the compensation he received for his services in that station. He acted a while as secretary of the Secret Committee of Congress, but was dismissed by them for publishing some of their secrets relative to Mr. Deane.

" Mr. Paine's manner of life was desultory: he often visited in the families of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Ritterhouse, and Mr. G. Clymer; where he made himself acceptable by a turn he discovered for philosophical as well as political subjects.

" After the year 1776 my intercourse with Mr. Paine was casual. I met him now and then at the tables of some of our whig citizens, where he spoke but little, but was always inoffensive in his manner and conversation.

" I possess one of his letters written to me from France upon the subject of the abolition of the slave trade. An extract from it was published in the Columbian Magazine.

" I did not see Mr. Paine when he passed

Digitized by Google

thro Philadelphia a few years ago. His principles avowed in his 'Age of Reason' were so offensive to me that I did not wish to renew my intercourse with him.

"I have thus briefly and in great haste endeavoured to answer your questions.—Should you publish this letter, I beg my testimony against Mr. Paine's infidelity may not be omitted in it.

"From, Sir,

"Your's respectfully,

"BENJAMIN RUSH."

One cannot read the close of this letter without lamenting to see this hackneyed word "infidelity" so everlastingly misapplied to injure and vilify those against whom it is hurled. The word "infidelity" means only a disbelief of any opinion or any thing advanced, and may be with propriety applied to christians as not believing in deism, as well as to deists as not believing in christianity; so that all

Digitized by Google

sectarians and all believers are infidels to their opposing doctrines.

As it may amuse the reader to see Mr. Paine's style while editor of the Pennsylvanian Magazine, the following extract is given from one of his essays on the riches of the earth and the diligence necessary to discover them:

"Tho Nature is gay, polite, and generous "abroad, she is sullen, rude, and niggardly "at home. Return the visit, and she admits "you with all the suspicion of a miser, and all "the reluctance of an antiquated beauty retired "to replenish her charms. Bred up in antide- "luvian notions, she has not yet acquired the "european taste of receiving visits in her dress- "ing room; she locks and bolts up her private "recesses with extraordinary care, as if not "only determined to preserve her hoards, but "to conceal her age, and hide the remains of a "face that was young and lovely before the "days of Adam. He that would view Nature "in her undress, and partake of her internal "treasures, must proceed with the resolution "of a robber, if not a ravisher: she gives no

Digitized by Google

" invitations to follow her to the cavern. The
" external earth makes no proclamation of the
" interior stores, but leaves to chance and in-
" dustry the discovery of the whole. In such
" gifts as nature can annually recreate she is
" noble and profuse, and entertains the whole
" world with the interests of her fortunes, but
" watches over the capital with the care of a
" miser. Her gold and jewels lie concealed in the
" earth, in caves of utter darkness; the hoards of
" wealth moulder in the chests, like the riches of
" the necromancer's cell. It must be very plea-
" sant to an adventurous speculatist to make
" excursions into these gothic regions: in his
" travels he may possibly come to a cabinet
" locked up in some rocky vault whose treasures
" might reward his toil and enable him to shine
" on his return as splendidly as Nature herself."

Soon after his return to America, as foreign supplies of gunpowder were stopt, he turned his attention to chemistry, and set his fertile talents to work in endeavouring to discover some cheap and expeditious method of furnishing Congress with saltpetre; and he proposed in the Pennsylvanian Journal, Nov. 2, 1775,

Digitized by Google

the plan of a saltpetre association for voluntarily supplying the national magazines with gunpowder.

His popularity in America now increased daily, and from this era he became a great public character and an object of interest and attention to the world.

In 1776, on the 10th of January he published the celebrated and powerfully discriminating pamphlet 'Common Sense.'

Perhaps the greatest compliment that can be paid to this work is the effect it so rapidly had on the people, who had before no predisposition towards its principles, as may be gathered from Mr. Paine's own words.

" I found the disposition of the people such,
" that they might have been led by a thread
" and governed by a reed. Their attachment
" to Britain was obstinate, and it was at that
" time a kind of treason to speak against it;
" they disliked the ministry but they esteemed
" the nation. Their idea of grievance operated

Digitized by Google

" without resentment, and their single object " was reconciliation."—*Crisis, No.* 7.

" Independence was a doctrine scarce and " rare, even towards the conclusion of the " year 1775. All our politics had been founded " on the hope or expectation of making the " matter up, a hope which though general on the " side of America, had never entered the head " or heart of the British court."—*Crisis, No.* 3.

Even Mr. Cheetham, whom no one will suspect of flattering Mr. Paine, thus forcibly describes the effects of 'Common Sense' on the people of America.

" This pamphlet of forty octavo pages, " holding out relief by proposing independence " to an oppressed and despairing people, was " published in January 1776; speaking a lan- " guage which the colonists had felt, but not " thought of. Its popularity, terrible in its " consequences to the parent country, was " unexampled in the history of the press.*

---

* "Nothing could be better timed than this performance;

Digitized by Google

" At first involving the colonists it was thought
" in the crime of rebellion, and pointing to a
" road leading inevitably to ruin, it was read
" with indignation and alarm; but when the
" reader, and every body read it, recovering
" the first shock, re-perused it, its arguments
" nourishing his feelings and appealing to his
" pride, re-animated his hopes, and satisfied his
" understanding, that 'Common Sense,' backed
" by the resources and force of the colonies,
" poor and feeble as they were, could alone
" rescue them from the unqualified oppression

In union with the feelings and sentiments of the people it produced surprising effects, — many thousands were convinced, and led to approve, and long for separation from the mother country; tho that measure was not only a few months before foreign to their wishes, but the object of their abhorrence, the current suddenly became so much in its favour, that it bore down all before it."—*Rumsay's Rev. vol.* 1. *page* 367, *London*, 1793.

" The publications which have appeared, have greatly promoted the spirit of independency, but no one so much as the pamphlet under the signature of 'Common Sense,' written by Mr. Thomas Paine, an Englishman. Nothing could have been better timed than this performance: it has produced most astonishing effects." — *Gordon's Rev. vol.* 2, *page* 78, *New York*, 1794.

Digitized by Google

" with which they were threatened. The un-
" known author, in the moments of enthusiasm
" which succeeded, was an angel sent from
" heaven to save from all the horrors of slavery
" by his timely, powerful, and unerring councils,
" a faithful but abused, a brave but misrepre-
" sented people."— *Cheetham's Life of Paine.**

'Common Sense,' it appears, was universally read and approved: the first edition sold almost immediately, and the second with very large additions was before the public soon after. On this production and some others, and his motives for writing, Mr. Paine thus remarks:

---

* When 'Common Sense' arrived at Albany the Convention of New York was in session: General Scott, a leading member, alarmed at the boldness and novelty of its arguments, mentioned his fears to several of his distinguished colleagues, and suggested a private meeting in the evening for the purpose of writing an answer. They accordingly met, and Mr. M'Kesson read the pamphlet thro. At first it was deemed both necessary and expedient to answer it immediately, but casting about for the necessary arguments they concluded to adjourn and meet again. In a few evenings they assembled, but so rapid was the change of opinion in the colonies at large in favour of independence, that they ultimately agreed not to oppose it.

Digitized by Google

" Politics and self interest have been so
" uniformly connected that the world from be-
" ing so often deceived has a right to be suspi-
" cious of public characters. But with regard
" to myself I am perfectly easy on this head.
" I did not at my first setting out in pub-
" lic life, nearly seventeen years ago, turn my
" thoughts to subjects of government from mo-
" tives of interest; and my conduct from that
" moment to this proves the fact. I saw an
" opportunity in which I thought I could do
" some good, and I followed exactly what my
" heart dictated: I neither read books, nor
" studied other people's opinions—I thought for
" myself. The case was this:

" During the suspension of the old go-
" vernment in America, both prior to and
" at the breaking out of hostilities, I was
" struck with the order and decorum with
" which every thing was conducted, and im-
" prest with the idea that a little more than
" what society naturally performed was all the
" government that was necessary. On these
" principles I published the pamphlet 'Com-
" mon Sense.'

Digitized by Google

" The success it met with was beyond any " thing since the invention of printing. I " gave the copyright up to every state in the " Union, and the demand run to not less than " one hundred thousand copies, and I conti- " nued the subject under the title of 'American " Crisis,' till the complete establishment of the " American revolution."

Further he says, " It was the cause of Ame- " rica that made me an author. The force " with which it struck my mind made it " impossible for me, feeling as I did, to be " silent; and if in the course of seven years " I have rendered her any service, I have " added likewise something to the reputation " of literature by freely and disinterestedly " employing it in the service of mankind, and " showing there may be genius without pros- " titution."

Owing to this disinterested conduct of Mr. Paine, it appears that tho the sale of 'Common Sense' was so great, he was in debt to the printer £29. 12*s.* 1*d.* This liberality and conscientious discharge of his duty with respect

Digitized by Google

to his serviceable writings, as he called them, he adopted thro life. "When I bring out my "poetical and anecdotical works," he would often say to me, "which will be little better "than amusing, I shall sell them; but I must "have no gain in view, must make no traffic of "my political and theological writings: they "are with me matter of principle, and not "matter of money: I cannot desire to derive "benefit from them, or make them the sub-"ject to attain it."

And twenty-seven years after the publication of 'Common Sense,' he thus writes to a friend. "As the French revolution advanced "it fixed the attention of the world, and drew "from the pen of Edmund Burke a furious attack; "this brought me once more on the public the-"atre of public politics, and occasioned my "writing a work that had the greatest run of "any ever published in the English language. "The principles in it were the same as those in "my former one. As to myself I acted in both "cases alike.

"I relinquished to the people of England

Digitized by Google

" all profit, as I had done to those of America,
" from the work; my reward existed in the am-
" bition of doing good, and in the independent
" happiness of my own mind. In my publica-
" tions I follow the rule I began, that is to
" consult with nobody, nor let any body see
" what I write till it appears publicly;* were I
" to do otherwise the case would be that be-

---

* A ridiculous notion has been often broached, that Mr. Paine wrote not the works attributed to him; or if he did, that he was greatly assisted: this silly stuff has been generally urged by his opponents, as if, even supposing it was so, it invalidated their matter, or in any way rendered them less true: the contrary is the fact. Mr. Paine was so tenacious on this subject that he would not alter a line or word, at the suggestion even of a friend.

I remember when he read me his letter to Dundas in 1792, I objected to the pun, Madjesty, as beneath him; "Never mind," he said, "they say Mad Tom of me, so I shall let it stand Madjesty." I say not that his tenacity on this subject was not absurd; but it affords the fullest contradiction to the opinion, that he ever had the least aid or assistance in his writings, or suffered the smallest alteration to be made in them by others.

If the reader will refer to the period in which Mr. Paine made use of this pun he will find that it could not have any allusion to the king's melancholy infirmity — he was one of the last men in the world to be guilty of any thing of the kind; nor can it be supposed it is now brought forward but for the reason stated.

Digitized by Google

" tween the timidity of some who are so afraid
" of doing wrong that they never do right, the
" puny judgment of others, and the despicable
" craft of preferring expedient to right, as if
" the world was a world of babies in leading
" strings, I should get forward with nothing.

" My path is a right line, as strait and
" clear to me as a ray of light. The boldness
" (if they will have it so) with which I speak
" on any subject is a compliment to the person
" I address; it is like saying to him, I treat you
" as a man and not as a child. With respect to
" any worldly object, as it is impossible to dis-
" cover any in me, therefore what I do, and my
" manner of doing it, ought to be ascribed to a
" good motive. In a great affair, where the
" good of man is at stake, I love to work for
" nothing; and so fully am I under the influ-
" ence of this principle, that I should lose the
" spirit, the pride, and the pleasure of it, were
" I conscious that I looked for reward."

In the course of this year, 1776, Mr. Paine accompanied the army with General Washington, and was with him in his retreat

Digitized by Google

from Hudson's River to the Delaware. At this period our author stood undismayed, amid a flying congress, and the general terror of the land. The Americans, he loudly asserted, were in possession of resources sufficient to authorize hope, and he laboured to inspire others with the same sentiments, which animated himself.

To effect this, on the 19th of December he published 'The Crisis,' wherein with a masterly hand he stated every reason for hope, and examined all the motives for apprehension.

This work he continued at various intervals, till the revolution was completely established: the last number appeared on the 19th of April, 1783, the same day a cessation of hostilities was proclaimed.

In 1777, congress unanimously and unknown to Mr. Paine, appointed him secretary in the foreign department; and from this time a close friendship continued between him and Dr. Franklin.

From his office went all letters that were officially written by congress: and the corre-

Digitized by Google

spondence of congress rested afterwards in his hands.

This appointment gave Mr. Paine an opportunity of seeing into foreign courts, and their manner of doing business and conducting themselves. In this office which obliged him to reside with congress wherever it fled, or however it was situated, Mr. Paine deserved the highest praise for the clearness, firmness, and magnanimity of his conduct. His uprightness and entire fitness for this office did not however prevent intrigue and interestedness, or defeat cabal; for a difference being fomented between congress and him, respecting one of their commissioners then in Europe, (Mr. Silas Deane) he resigned his secretaryship on the 8th of January, 1779, and declined, at the same time, the pecuniary offers made him by the ministers of France and Spain, M. Gerrard and Don Juan Mirralles.

This resignation of, or dismissal from his situation as secretary for foreign affairs, has been so variously mentioned and argued upon,

Digitized by Google

that the reader is referred to the tedious detail of it in the journals of the day, if he has patience to wade thro so much American temporary, and party political gossip. Mr. Paine's own account in his letter to congress shortly is, "I prevented Deane's fraudulent "demand being paid, and so far the country "is obliged to me, but I became the victim "of my integrity."

The party junto against him say he was guilty of a violation of his official duty, &c.

And here I shall leave it, as the bickerings of parties in America, in the year 1779, cannot be worth an European's attention; and as to the Americans themselves they have various means by their legislatural records, registers of the day, and pamphlets, then and since, to go into the subject if they think it of importance enough.

About this time Mr. Paine had the degree of master of arts conferred on him by the university of Philadelphia; and in 1780, was chosen a member of the American Phi-

Digitized by Google

losophical Society, when it was revived by the legislature of the province of Pennsylvania.

In February 1781 Colonel Laurens, amidst the financial distress of America, was sent on a mission to France in order to obtain a loan, and Mr. Paine, at the solicitation of the colonel, accompanied him.

Mr. Paine, in his letter to congress, intimates that this mission originated with himself, and takes upon himself the credit of it.

They arrived in France the following month, obtained a loan of ten millions of livres, and a present of six millions, and landed in America the succeeding August with two millions and a half in silver. His value, his firmness, his independence, as a political character were now universally acknowledged; his great talents, and the high purposes to which he devoted them, made him generally sought after and looked up to; and General Washington was foremost to express the great sense he had of the excellence of his character, and the importance of his services; and would himself have pro-

Digitized by Google

posed to congress a great remuneration of them, had not Mr. Paine positively objected to it, as a bad precedent, and an improper mode.

In August 1782, he published his spirited letter to the Abbé Raynal; of this letter a very sensible writer observes, "that it dis- "plays an accuracy of judgment and strength "of penetration that would do honour to the "most enlightened philosopher. It exhibits "proofs of knowledge so comprehensive, and "discrimination so acute, as must in the "opinion of the best judges place the author "in the highest ranks of literature."

We shall here make a few extracts from this work, which will fully refute the malignant insinuations of his enemies, who represent him as totally destitute of the benefits resulting from a liberal education. The impartial reader need only attend to the ensuing extracts, which will abundantly convince him of the futility of such assertions, and prove our author's judgment as a critic, and his acquaintance with polite learning.

Digitized by Google

In the introduction to this letter are the following expressions: "There are few men "in any country who can at once, and without "the aid of reflection and revisal, combine "warm passions with a cool temper, and the "full expansion of imagination with the na- "tural and necessary gravity of judgment, so "as to be rightly balanced within themselves, "and to make a reader feel, fancy, and under- "stand justly at the same time. To call these "powers of the mind into action at once, in a "manner that neither shall interrupt, and that "each shall aid and invigorate the other, is "a talent very rarely possessed."

"It often happens that the weight of an "argument is lost by the wit of setting it off, "or the judgment disordered by an intem- "perate irritation of the passions; yet a certain "degree of animation must be felt by the "writer, and raised in the reader, in order "to interest the attention, and a sufficient "scope given to the imagination to enable "it to create in the mind a sight of the per- "sons, characters, and circumstances of the "subject; for without these, the judgment

Digitized by Google

" will feel little or no excitement to office,
" and its determination will be cold, sluggish,
" and imperfect. But if either or both of the
" two former are raised too high, or heated
" too much, the judgment will be jostled from
" its seat, and the whole matter, however
" perfect in itself, will diminish into a pan-
" tomime of the mind, in which we create
" images that promote no other purpose than
" amusement."

" The abbé's writings bear evident marks
" of that extension and rapidity of thinking,
" and quickness of sensation, which above all
" others require revisal."

In the course of the letter we find the following admirable remarks on the Abbé Raynal's writings:

" In this paragraph the conception is lofty
" and the expressions elegant; but the colour-
" ing is too high for the original, and the
" likeness fails through an excess of graces."

" To fit the powers of thinking and the

Digitized by Google

" turn of language to the subject, so as to " bring out a clear conclusion that shall hit the " point in question and nothing else, is the true " criterion of writing. But the greater part of " the abbé's writings, if he will pardon me the " remark, appear to me uncentral, and burthened " with variety. They represent a beautiful wil- " derness without paths, in which the eye is " diverted by every thing, without being par- " ticularly directed to any thing, in which it is " agreeable to be lost and difficult to find the " way out."

The following luminous passage on prejudice, and the comparison drawn to illustrate it, exhibit at once the eloquence of the orator and the judgment of the philosopher.

" There is something exceedingly curious in " the constitution and operation of prejudice: " it has the singular ability of accommodating " itself to all the possible varieties of the human " mind. Some passions and vices are but thinly " scattered among mankind, and find only here " and there a fitness of reception. But prejudice, " like the spider, makes every where its home.

Digitized by Google

" It has neither taste nor choice of place, and all
" that it requires is room. There is scarcely a
" situation except fire and water, in which a
" spider will not live; so let the mind be as
" naked as the walls of an empty and forsaken
" tenement, gloomy as a dungeon, or ornamented
" with the richest abilities of thinking, let it be
" hot, cold, dark, or light, lonely or inhabited,
" still prejudice, if undisturbed, will fill it
" with cobwebs, and live like the spider
" where there seems nothing to live on. If
" the one prepares her poisoning to her pa-
" late, and her use, the other does the same,
" and as several of our passions are strongly
" characterized by the animal world, prejudice
" may be denominated the spider of the
" mind."

On the 29th of October he brought out his excellent letter to the Earl of Shelburne on his speech in the House of Lords, July the 10th, 1782.

To get an idea of the speech of this earl, it may not be necessary to quote more than the following sentence. " When Great

Digitized by Google

"Britain acknowledges American indepen-
"dence the sun of Britain's glory is set for
"ever."

"When the war ended," says Mr. Paine, "I
"went from Philadelphia to Bordentown on
"the east end of the Delaware, where I
"have a small place. Congress was at this
"time at Prince Town fifteen miles distant,
"and General Washington had taken his
"head quarters at Rocky Hill within the
"neighbourhood of congress for the purpose
"of resigning his commission, the object for
"which he had accepted it being accom-
"plished, and of retiring to private life.
"While he was on this business he wrote
"me the letter which I here subjoin."

"Rocky Hill, Sept. 10, 1783.

"I have learned since I have been at this place that you are at Bordentown. Whether for the sake of retirement or economy I know not; be it for either, for both, or whatever it may, if you will come to this place and partake with me, I shall be exceedingly happy to see

Digitized by Google

you at it. Your presence may remind congress of your past services to this country, and if it is in my power to impress them command my best services with freedom; as they will be rendered cheerful by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who with much pleasure subscribes himself

" Your sincere friend,

" G. WASHINGTON."

In 1785 congress granted Mr. Paine three thousand dollars for his services to the people of America, as may be seen by the following document.

" Friday, August 26, 1785.

" On the report of a committee consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Petit, and Mr. King, to whom was referred a letter of the 13th from Thomas Paine;

" Resolved, That the early, unsolicited, and continued labours of Mr. Thomas Paine, in explaining the principles of the late revolution, by ingenious and timely publications upon the nature of liberty and civil government, have

Digitized by Google

been well received by the citizens of these states, and merit the approbation of congress; and that in consideration of these services, and the benefits produced thereby, Mr. Paine is entitled to a liberal gratification from the United States."

"Monday, October 3, 1785.

"On the report of a committee consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Long, to whom were referred sundry letters from Mr. Thomas Paine, and a report on his letter of the 14th of September;

"Resolved, That the board of treasury take order for paying to Mr. Thomas Paine, the sum of three thousand dollars, for the considerations of the 23rd of August last." *Journals of Congress.*

The state of Pennsylvania, in which he first published 'Common Sense' and 'The Crisis,' in 1785, presented him, by an act of legislature, £500 currency. New York gave him the estate at New Rochelle in the county of Westchester, consisting of more than three hundred

Digitized by Google

acres of land in high cultivation: on this estate was an elegant stone house, 125 by 28 feet, besides out-houses: the latter property was farmed much to his advantage, during his long stay in Europe, by some friends, as will hereafter be more fully noticed.

Mr. Monroe, when ambassador in England, once speaking on this subject at my house, said that Mr. Paine would have received a very large remuneration from the state of Virginia, but that while the matter was before the assembly, and he was extremely popular and in high favour, he published reasons against some proceedings of that state which he thought improper, and thereby lost, by a majority of one, the high reward he would otherwise have received*; — a memorable instance of the independence of his mind, and of his attachment to truth and right above all other considerations. A conduct exactly oppo-

---

* This work was entitled 'Public Good, being an Examination of the Claim of Virginia to the vacant Western Territory.'

Digitized by Google

site to that of the pensioned Burke, whose venality cannot be better pointed out than in the following conversation with Mr. Paine, after dining together at the Duke of Portland's at Bulstrode.

Burke was very inquisitive to know how the Americans were disposed toward the king of England, when Mr. Paine, to whom the subject was an ungracious one, and who felt teazed, related the following anecdote.

At a small town, in which was a tavern bearing the sign of the king's head, it was insisted on by the inhabitants that a memento so odious should not continue up; but there was no painter at hand, to change it into General Washington, or any other favorite, so the sign was suffered to remain, with this inscription under it —

This is the sign of the Loggerhead!

Burke, who at this moment was a concealed pensioner, tho a public oppositionist, replied peevishly, " Loggerhead or any other head, he

Digitized by Google

" has many good things to give away, and I " should be glad of some of them."

This same Mr. Burke, in one of his speeches in the House of Commons, said, " kings were naturally fond of low company," and " that many of the nobility act the part of flatterers, parasites, pimps, and buffoons," &c.: but his character will be best appreciated, by reading Mr. Paine's Letter to the Addressers.

In 1786 he published in Philadelphia ' Dissertation on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money,' an octavo pamphlet of sixty-four pages. The bank alluded to is the bank of North America, of which he thus speaks:

" In the year 1780, when the British army " having laid waste the southern states, closed " its ravages by the capture of Charlston, when " the financial sources of congress were dried " up, when the public treasury was empty, and " the army of independence paralysed by want, " a voluntary subscription for its relief was " raised in Philadelphia. This voluntary fund,

Digitized by Google

" amounting to three hundred thousand pounds, " afterwards converted into a bank by the " subscribers, headed by Robert Norris, sup- " plied the wants of the army; probably the " aids which it furnished enabled Washington " to carry into execution his well-concerted " plan against Cornwallis. Congress in the " year 1781 incorporated the subscribers to the " fund, under the title of the Bank of North " America. In the following year it was fur- " ther incorporated by an act of the Penn- " sylvanian assembly."

Mr. Paine liberally subscribed five hundred dollars to this fund.

After the establishment of the independence of America, of the vigorous and successful exertions to attain which glorious object he had been the animating principle, soul, and support; feeling his exertions no longer requisite in that country, he embarked for France, and arrived at Paris early in 1787, carrying with him his fame as a literary man, an acute philosopher, and most profound politician.

Digitized by Google

At this time he presented to the Academy of Sciences the model of a bridge which he invented, the principle of which has been since so highly celebrated and approved.

From Paris he arrived in England the 3d of September, just thirteen years after his departure for Philadelphia. Prompted by that filial affection which his conduct had ever manifested he hastened to Thetford to visit his mother, on whom he settled an allowance of nine shillings a week. Of this comfortable solace she was afterwards deprived by the bankruptcy of the merchant in whom the trust was vested.

Mr. Paine resided at Rotherham in Yorkshire during part of the year 1788, where an iron bridge upon the principle alluded to was cast and erected, and obtained for him among the mathematicians of Europe a high reputation. In the erection of this, a considerable sum had been expended, for which he was hastily arrested by the assignees of an American merchant, and thrown into confinement.

Digitized by Google

From this however, and the debt, he cleared himself in about three weeks.*

The publication of 'Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution' produced in reply from Mr. Paine his great, universally known, and celebrated work 'Rights of Man.' The first part of this work was written partly at the Angel at Islington, partly in Harding Street, Fetter Lane, and finished at Versailles. In February 1791 this book made its appearance in London, and many hundred thousand copies were rapidly sold.

In May following he went again to France, and was at Paris at the time of the flight of the king, and also on his return. On this memorable occasion he made this observation: "You see the absurdity of your system of "government; here will be a whole nation "disturbed by the folly of one man." Upon this subject also he made the following reply to the Marquis la Fayette who came into his

* More or less upon this plan of Mr. Paine's, the different iron bridges in Europe have been constructed.

Digitized by Google

bed-room before he was up, saying, "The birds "are flown." "'Tis well: I hope there will "be no attempt to recall them."

On the 13th of July he returned to London, but did not attend the celebration of the anniversary of the French revolution the following day, as has been falsely asserted.

On the 20th of August he drew up the address and declaration of the gentlemen who met at the Thatched House Tavern. This address is so replete with wisdom and moderation that it is here subjoined.

"Address and Declaration* of the Friends of Universal Peace and Liberty, held at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's Street, Aug. 20, 1791, by Thomas Paine, Author of the Works entitled 'Common Sense' and 'Rights of Man.'

"Friends and Fellow Citizens,

"At a moment like the present, when wilful misrepresentations are industri-

* Vide Appendix to IId part of 'Rights of Man.'

Digitized by Google

ously spread by partizans of arbitrary power and the advocates of passive obedience and court government, we think it incumbent upon us to declare to the world our principles, and the motives of our conduct.

" We rejoice at the glorious event of the French revolution. If it be asked, ' What is the French revolution to us?' we answer as has been already answered in another place.* ' It is much—much to us as men; much to us ' as Englishmen. As men, we rejoice in the ' freedom of twenty-five millions of men. We ' rejoice in the prospect, which such a magni- ' ficent example opens to the world.'

" We congratulate the French nation for having laid the axe to the foot of tyranny, and for erecting government on the sacred hereditary rights of man; rights which appertain to all, and not to any one more than another.

" We know of no human authority superior to that of a whole nation; and we profess and

---

* Declaration of the volunteers of Belfast.

Digitized by Google

proclaim it as our principle that every nation has at all times an inherent indefesible right to constitute and establish such government for itself as best accords with its disposition, interest, and happiness.

"As Englishmen, we also rejoice, because we are immediately interested in the French revolution.

"Without inquiring into the justice on either side, of the reproachful charges of intrigue and ambition which the English and French courts have constantly made on each other, we confine ourselves to this observation, that if the court of France only was in fault, and the numerous wars which have distressed both countries are chargeable to her alone, that court now exists no longer, and the cause and the consequence must cease together. The French therefore, by the revolution they have made, have conquered for us as well as for themselves, if it be true that this court only was in fault, and ours never.

"On this state of the case the French re-

Digitized by Google

volution concerns us immediately: we are oppressed with a heavy national debt, a burthen of taxes, an expensive administration of government, beyond those of any people in the world.

" We have also a very numerous poor; and we hold that the moral obligation of providing for old age, helpless infancy, and poverty, is far superior to that of supplying the invented wants of courtly extravagance, ambition, and intrigue.

" We believe there is no instance to be produced but in England, of seven millions of inhabitants, which make but little more than one million families, paying yearly seventeen millions of taxes.*

" As it has always been held out by the administrations that the restless ambition of the court of France rendered this expence necessary to us for our own defence, we consequently rejoice as men deeply interested in the

* Now nearly seventy millions!

Digitized by Google

French revolution, for that court, as we have already said, exists no longer, and consequently the same enormous expenses need not continue to us.

" Thus rejoicing as we sincerely do, both as men and Englishmen, as lovers of universal peace and freedom, and as friends to our national prosperity and reduction of our public expences, we cannot but express our astonishment that any part of any members of our own government should reprobate the extinction of that very power in France, or wish to see it restored, to whose influence they formerly attributed (whilst they appeared to lament) the enormous increase of our own burthens and taxes. What, then, are they sorry that the pretence for new oppressive taxes, and the occasion for continuing many old taxes, will be at an end? If so, and if it is the policy of courts and court government to prefer enemies to friends, and a system of war to that of peace, as affording more pretences for places, offices, pensions, revenue and taxation, it is high time for the people of every nation to look with circumspection to their own interest.

Digitized by Google

" Those who pay the expences, and not those who participate in the emoluments arising from them, are the persons immediately interested in inquiries of this kind. We are a part of that national body on whom this annual expence of seventeen millions falls; and we consider the present opportunity of the French revolution as a most happy one for lessening the enormous load under which this nation groans. If this be not done we shall then have reason to conclude that the cry of intrigue and ambition against other courts is no more than the common cant of all courts.

" We think it also necessary to express our astonishment that a government desirous of being called FREE, should prefer connexions with the most despotic and arbitrary powers in Europe. We know of none more deserving this description than those of Turkey and Prussia, and the whole combination of German despots.

" Separated as we happily are by nature from the tumults of the continent, we reprobate all systems and intrigues which sacrifice (and that too at a great expence) the blessings

Digitized by Google

of our natural situation. Such systems cannot have a natural origin.

" If we are asked what government is, we hold it to be nothing more than a national association; and we hold that to be the best which secures to every man his rights and promotes the greatest quantity of happiness with the least expence. We live to improve, or we live in vain; and therefore we admit of no maxims of government or policy on the mere score of antiquity or other men's authority, the old whigs or the new.

" We will exercise the reason with which we are endued, or we possess it unworthily. As reason is given at all times, it is for the purpose of being used at all times.

" Among the blessings which the French revolution has produced to that nation we enumerate the abolition of the feudal system, of injustice, and of tyranny, on the 4th of August, 1789. Beneath the feudal system all Europe has long groaned, and from it England is not yet free. Game laws, bo-

Digitized by Google

rough tenures, and tyrannical monopolies of numerous kinds still remain amongst us; but rejoicing as we sincerely do in the freedom of others till we shall haply accomplish our own, we intended to commemorate this prelude to the universal extirpation of the feudal system by meeting on the anniversary of that day, (the 4th of August) at the Crown and Anchor: from this meeting we were prevented by the interference of certain unnamed and sculking persons with the master of the tavern, who informed us that on their representation he would not receive us. Let those who live by or countenance feudal oppressions take the reproach of this ineffectual meanness and cowardice to themselves: they cannot stifle the public declaration of our honest, open, and avowed opinions. These are our principles, and these our sentiments; they embrace the interest and happiness of the great body of the nation of which we are a part. As to riots and tumults, let those answer for them who by wilful misrepresentations endeavour to excite and promote them; or who seek to stun the sense of the nation, and lose the great

Digitized by Google

cause of public good in the outrages of a mis-informed mob. We take our ground on principles that require no such riotous aid.

" We have nothing to apprehend from the poor for we are pleading their cause; and we fear not proud oppression for we have truth on our side.

" We say and we repeat it, that the French revolution opens to the world an opportunity in which all good citizens must rejoice, that of promoting the general happiness of man, and that it moreover offers to this country in particular an opportunity of reducing our enormous taxes: these are our objects, and we will pursue them.

" JOHN HORNE TOOKE, chairman."

The language of this address is bold and free, but not more so than that of the late Lord Chatham, or of that once violent advocate of reform, the late Mr. Pitt, better known by the title of the ' Enemy of the Human Race.'

Digitized by Google

" There is a set of men" (says the Earl of Chatham) " in the city of London, who " are known to live in riot and luxury, " upon the plunder of the ignorant, the " innocent, and the helpless, upon that part " of the community which stands most in " need of, and best deserves the care and " protection of the legislature. To me, my " lords, whether they be miserable jobbers " of 'Change Alley, or the lofty Asiatic " plunderers of Leadenhall Street, they are " equally detestable. I care but little whe- " ther a man walks on foot, or is drawn by " eight horses, or by six horses; if his " luxury be supported by the plunder of " his country, I despise and abhor him. " My lords, while I had the honour of " serving his majesty, I never ventured to " look at the Treasury but from a distance: " it is a business I am unfit for, and to " which I never could have submitted. The " little I know of it, has not served to " raise my opinion of what is vulgarly called " the monied interest; I mean that blood- " sucker, that muckworm, which calls him- " self the friend of government; which pre-

Digitized by Google

" tends to serve this or that administration,
" and may be purchased on the same terms
" by any administration. Under this descrip-
" tion I include the whole race of com-
" missioners, jobbers, contractors, clothiers,
" and remitters."*

" No one, Mr. Speaker," says Mr. Pitt,
" knows better than I do the decencies that
" are due to the sovereign from this house;
" but at the same time, I am not ignorant
" of the duty I owe to my country: I scorn
" to approach the crown with servility and
" adulation; and I cannot countenance or
" cherish the determined spirit breathed in
" the speech, without betraying my duty to
" my constituents. The country is almost
" drained of men and money,† blood is shed
" in profusion, and millions squandered, only
" to purchase disasters and disgrace. I really

---

* Vide Earl of Chatham's speech, in the debate on Falkland's Island.

† The national debt was then £251,000,000: under the management of this same Mr. Pitt, it is now (1811) nearly £600,000,000; and now (1819) nearly one thousand millions.

Digitized by Google

" cannot tell how the state can be retrieved,
" its situation is desperate, and it is this
" circumstance alone that makes me have
" recourse to the expedient I am going to
" adopt. It is not a change of ministers
" that I look for, I do not want to see the
" present servants of the crown out of office,
" or the persons who sit near me appointed
" in their room; it is a total change of sys-
" tem and measures that I look for; and till
" I can have some pledge that in this my
" wishes shall be gratified I will oppose
" privilege to prerogative, and vote that
" not a shilling be given from the peo-
" ple to the crown until they shall first
" have received an earnest that ministers feel
" a thorough conviction of past errors, and
" are determined to do every thing to cor-
" rect them. When this shall be done no
" one shall surpass me in cheerfulness in
" granting ample supplies; but I must pause
" before I can think of voting away the
" money of the people with no probability
" of national advantage, but with almost
" moral certainty of ruin to their affairs."—
Mr. Pitt's Speech on Friday, Nov. 30, 1781.

Digitized by Google

On the subject of the address at the Thatched House Tavern, which Mr. Paine did write, it is impossible not to quote 'Cheetham's Life' just to exhibit his blindness and ignorance, and to show how prejudice had warped this once idoliser of Mr. Paine.—"Horne Tooke, perhaps the most "acute man of his age, was at this meeting; and as it was rumoured, Paine observes, that the great grammarian was the "author of the address, he takes the liberty "of mentioning the fact, that he wrote it "himself. I never heard of the rumour, "which was doubtless a fiction formed and "asserted by Paine merely to gratify his "egotism. No one could mistake the uncouth and ungrammatical writings of one, "for the correct and elegant productions of "the other." But what can be expected from him who calls 'Common Sense' a wretched work; 'The Rights of Man,' a miserable production; and 'Burke's Reflections,' a book of the proudest sagacity?

What can be expected from him who a few years before writing the above, in England

Digitized by Google

deified Mr. Paine, and called his writings immortal? And who says "Fox was vehemently "adverse, and in this he was right, to universal "suffrage:" who further says of the American government,—

"I hazard nothing in remarking, unless it "be hazardous to state the truth, that however "excellent the system of our government may "be in theory, the whole operation of our "system of politics in practice, with the chiefs "who lead the two parties, and who by hook "or by crook govern the nation, is one of "mystery, craft, and imposition. In these "articles which abound amongst us, no nation "can vie with the United States. That I hold "to be impossible.

"This prodigy of human intellect Paine, "or rather this sediment of ever-renewed "intoxication, was presented to the convention "on the 15th of February 1798. In this "disproportioned thing, this dream of well "meaning fanatics or deliberate act of cool "dilapidators, universal suffrage was laid "down to perfection.

Digitized by Google

" May not Paine's constitution of Penn-
" sylvania have been the cause of the tyranny
" of Robespierre?

" Paine was always an advocate either of
" democratic anarchy or of imperial despotism,
" there was no medium with him.

" They talk," he said to a friend of mine, "of
" the tyranny of the Emperor of France. I
" know Bonaparte, I have lived under his
" government, and he allows as much freedom
" as I wish or as any body ought to have.
" With Napoleon's invasion of Spain he was
" enraptured, and of course wished him success!
" Could such a man be a friend of freedom?"*

What can be expected from that Cheetham whose book is filled with such matter as the

---

* Of the infamous falsehood of this assertion I am a complete witness, being with him when he left France, and knowing how truly he appreciated, and disliked the character of Buonaparte, and his government, and how fervent his wishes were to leave that country, which he emphatically called Golgotha!

Digitized by Google

above, who was the worshipper of this very Paine in England, and the most violent disseminator of his writings, and who in his 'Life' of him has such trash as the following? and which I know to be false.

" When the 'Rights of Man' reached
" Lewes, where Paine married Miss Ollive,
" the women as with one voice said, 'Od rot
" 'im, let im come ear if he dust, an we'll
" 'tell im what the rights of women is; we'll
" 'toss im in a blanket, an ring im out of
" 'Lewis wi our frying pans.' "

Mr. Paine's life in London was a quiet round of philosophical leisure and enjoyment. It was occupied in writing, in a small epistolary correspondence, in walking about with me to visit different friends, occasionally lounging at coffee-houses and public places, or being visited by a select few. Lord Edward Fitzgerald; the French and American ambassadors, Mr. Sharp the engraver, Romney the painter, Mrs. Wolstonecroft, Joel Barlow, Mr. Hull, Mr. Christie, Dr. Priestly, Dr. Towers, Colonel Oswald, the walking Stewart, Captain

Digitized by Google

Sampson Perry, Mr. Tuffin, Mr. William Choppin, Captain De Stark, Mr. Horne Tooke, &c. &c. were among the number of his friends and acquaintance; and of course, as he was my inmate, the most of my associates were frequently his. At this time he read but little, took his nap after dinner, and played with my family at some game in the evening, as chess, dominos, and drafts, but never at cards; in recitations, singing, music, &c.; or passed it in conversation: the part he took in the latter was always enlightened, full of information, entertainment, and anecdote. Occasionally we visited enlightened friends, indulged in domestic jaunts, and recreations from home, frequently lounging at the White Bear, Piccadilly, with his old friend the walking Stewart, and other clever travellers from France, and different parts of Europe and America.

When by ourselves we sate very late, and often broke in on the morning hours, indulging the reciprocal interchange of affectionate and confidential intercourse. "Warm from the heart and faithful to its fires," was that inter-

Digitized by Google

course, and gave to us the "feast of reason and the flow of soul."

It was at the Mr. Christie's before mentioned, at a dinner party with several of the above, and other characters of great interest and talent, that Horne Tooke happened to sit between Mr. Paine and Madame D'Eon; for this character was, at this time, indisputably feminine. Tooke, whose wit and brilliant conversation was ever abundant, looking on each side of him, said, "I am now in the "most extraordinary situation in which ever "man was placed. On the left of me sits "a gentleman, who, brought up in obscurity, "has proved himself the greatest political "writer in the world, and has made more "noise in it, and excited more attention and "obtained more fame, than any man ever did. "On the right of me sits a lady, who has "been employed in public situations at diffe-"rent courts; who had high rank in the army, "was greatly skilled in horsemanship, who has "fought several duels, and at the small sword "had no equal; who for fifty years past, all "Europe has recognised in the character and

Digitized by Google

" dress of a gentleman."—" Ah!" replied Madame D'Eon, " these are very extraordinary " things, indeed, Monsieur Tooke, and proves " you did not know what was at the bottom."

If this same Chevalier D'Eon had been lost at sea, burnt, or had in any way left the world, unknown and unnoticed, all Europe would have believed he was a woman, as really as any creed in their religion; and yet this was not so. In 1810, soon after his death, I saw and examined this mysterious character; and that he was incontestibly a man, a chevalier, and not a madame, is most certain. So that what every body says is not always true; and this is an instance to be added to many thousands of the truth of the sailor's adage, "Seeing is believing;" and should warn us not to give credence hastily to any thing that does not fall under our own immediate experience, knowledge, and observation.

The second part of 'Rights of Man,' which completed the celebrity of its author, and placed him at the head of political writers, was published in February 1792. Never had any

Digitized by Google

work so rapid and extensive a sale; and it has been calculated that near a million and a half of copies were printed and published in England.

From this time Mr. Paine generally resided in London, and principally with me, till the 12th of September 1792, when he sailed for France with Mr. Achilles Audibert, who came express from the French convention to my house to request his personal assistance in their deliberations.

On his arrival at Calais a public dinner was provided, a royal salute was fired from the battery, the troops were drawn out, and there was a general rejoicing throughout the town. He has often been heard to remark that the proudest moment of his life was that in which, on this occasion, he set foot upon the Gallic shore.

In his own country he had been infamously treated, and at the time of his quitting Dover most rudely dealt with both by the officers who ransacked his trunks, and a set of hire-

Digitized by Google

lings who were employed to hiss, hoot, and maltreat, and it is strongly suspected, to destroy him.

It deprest him to think that his endeavours to cleanse the Augæan stable of corruption in England should have been so little understood, or so ill appreciated as to subject him to such ignominious, such cowardly treatment. Yet seven hours after this those very endeavours obtained him an honourable reception in France, and on his landing he was respectfully escorted, amidst the loud plaudits of the multitude, to the house of his friend Mr. Audibert, the chief magistrate of the place, where he was visited by the commandant and all the municipal officers in form, who afterwards gave him a sumptuous entertainment in the town hall.

The same honour was also paid him on his departure for Paris.*

---

* The reader is referred to Brissot's paper 'Le Patriot François,' and 'Le Journal de Gorsas,' for minute parti-

Digitized by Google

About the time of his arrival at Paris the national convention began to divide itself into factions; the king's friends had been completely subdued by the suppression of the Feuillans, the affair of the 10th of August, and the massacre of the 2nd and 3rd of September; while the jacobins who had been hitherto considered as the patriotic party, became in their turns divided into different cabals, some of them wishing a federative government, others, the enragès, desiring the death of the king and of all allied to the nobility; but none of those were republicans.

Those few deputies who had just ideas of a commonwealth, and whose leader was Paine, did not belong to the jacobin club.

I mention this, because Mr. Paine took

---

culars of Mr. Paine's introduction to the president of the convention, to the ministers, and different committees; his being appointed a deputy, and a member of the committee of constitution, &c. &c. &c.

Digitized by Google

infinite trouble to instill into their minds the difference between liberty and licentiousness, and the danger to the peace, good order, and well-doing of society, that must arise from letting the latter encroach on the prerogatives of the former.

He laboured incessantly to preserve the life of the king, and he succeeded in making some converts to his opinions on this subject; and his life would have been saved but for Barrere, who having been appointed by Robespierre to an office he was ambitious of obtaining, and certainly very fit for, his influence brought with it forty votes; so early was corruption introduced into this assembly. For Calais, Mr. Paine was returned deputy to the convention; he was elected as well for Versailles, but as the former town first did him the honour he became its representative. He was extremely desirous and expected to be appointed one of the deputies to Holland; a circumstance that probably would have taken place had not the committee of constitution delayed so long the production of the new form

Digitized by Google

that the jacobins anticipated them, and published proposals for a new constitution before the committee.

This delay was owing to the jealousy of Condorcet who had written the preface, part of which some of the members thought should have been in the body of the work.

Brissot and the whole party of the Gerondites lost ground daily after this; and with them died away all that was national, just, and humane: they were however highly to blame for their want of energy.

In the beginning of April 1793, the convention received the letter from Dumourier that put all France in a panic: in this letter he mentioned the confidence the army had in him, and his intention of marching to Paris to restore to France her constitutional king: this had the strongest effect, as it was accompanied by an address from the prince of Coburg, in which he agreed to co-operate with Dumourier.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Paine, who never considered the vast difference between the circumstances of the two countries, France and America, suggested an idea that Dumourier might be brought about by appointing certain deputies to wait on him coolly and dispassionately, to hear his grievances, and armed with powers to redress them.

On this subject he addressed a letter to the convention, in which he instanced the case of an American general who receded with the army under his command in consequence of his being dissatisfied with the proceedings of congress. The congress were panic struck by this event, and gave up all for lost; but when the first impression of alarm subsided they sent a deputation from their own body to the general, who with his staff gave them the meeting; and thus matters were again reinstated. But there was too much impetuosity and faction in the French convention to admit of such temperate proceedings.

Mr. Paine, however, had written the letter,

Digitized by Google

and was going to Brissot's in order to meet Barrere for the purpose of proposing an adjustment, when he met a friend who had that moment left the convention, who informed him that a decree had been past offering one hundred thousand crowns for Dumourier's head, and another making it high treason to propose any thing in his favour.

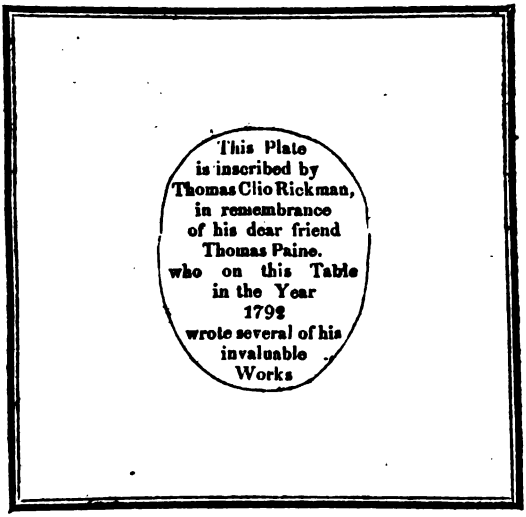
What the consequence of Mr. Paine's project might have been I do not know, but the offer of the convention made hundreds of desperate characters leave Paris, as speedily as possible, in hopes of the proffered reward; it detached the affection of the soldiers from their general, and made them go over to the enemy.

Towards the close of 1792 his 'Letter to the Addressers' was published, which was sought after with the same avidity as his other productions.

Of this letter, which, with many other things, he wrote at my house, I have the

Digitized by Google

original manuscript; and the table on which they were written is still carefully preserved by me: it has a brass plate in the centre with this inscription placed there by my direction on his quitting England—



The 'Letter to the Addressers' possesses all Mr. Paine's usual strength of reasoning, and abounds also in the finest strokes of genuine satire, wit, and humour. About this time a prosecution took place against the publishers of 'Rights of Man.'

How this was managed, and Mr. Paine's

Digitized by Google

opinion of it, will be best understood by the following letter never before published.

" To Sir Archibald Macdonald,

" Attorney General.

" Sir,

" Though I have some reasons for believing that you were not the original promoter or encourager of the prosecution commenced against the work entitled 'Rights of Man,' either as that prosecution is intended to effect the author, the publisher, or the public; yet as you appear the official person therein, I address this letter to you, not as Sir Archibald Macdonald, but as attorney general.

" You began by a prosecution against the publisher Jordan, and the reason assigned by Mr. Secretary Dundas, in the House of Commons in the debate on the proclamation, May 25, for taking that measure, was, he said, because Mr. Paine could not be found, or words to that effect. Mr. Paine, sir, so far from secreting himself, never went a step out of his way, nor in the least instance varied

Digitized by Google

from his usual conduct, to avoid any measure you might choose to adopt with respect to him. It is on the purity of his heart, and the universal utility of the principles and plans which his writings contain, that he rests the issue; and he will not dishonour it by any kind of subterfuge. The apartments which he occupied at the time of writing the work last winter he has continued to occupy to the present hour, and the solicitors to the prosecution knew where to find him; of which there is a proof in their own office as far back as the 21st of May, and also in the office of my own attorney.

" But admitting, for the sake of the case, that the reason for proceeding against the publisher was, as Mr. Dundas stated, that Mr. Paine could not be found, that reason can now exist no longer.

" The instant that I was informed that an information was preparing to be filed against me as the author of I believe one of the most

Digitized by Google

useful and benevolent books ever offered to mankind, I directed my attorney to put in an appearance; and as I shall meet the prosecution fully and fairly and with a good and upright conscience, I have a right to expect that no act of littleness will be made use of on the part of the prosecution towards influencing the future issue with respect to the author. This expression may perhaps appear obscure to you, but I am in the possession of some matters which serve to shew that the action against the publisher is not intended to be a *real* action. If therefore any persons concerned on the prosecution have found their cause so weak as to make it appear convenient to them to enter into a negociation with the publisher, whether for the purpose of his submitting to a verdict, and to make use of the verdict so obtained as a circumstance, by way of precedent, on a future trial against myself; or for any other purpose not fully made known to me; if, I say, I have cause to suspect this to be the case I shall most certainly withdraw the defence I should otherwise have made or promoted on his (the publisher's) behalf, and leave the *negociators* to themselves, and

Digitized by Google

shall reserve the whole of the defence for the *real* trial.

" But, Sir, for the purpose of conducting this matter with at least that appearance of fairness and openness that shall justify itself before the public, whose cause it really is (for it is the right of public discussion and investigation that is questioned), I have to propose to you to cease the prosecution against the publisher; and as the reason or pretext can no longer exist for continuing it against him because Mr. Paine could not be found, that you would direct the whole process against me, with whom the prosecuting party will not find it possible to enter into any private negociation.

" I will do the cause full justice, as well for the sake of the nation, as for my own reputation.

" Another reason for discontinuing the process against the publisher is, because it can amount to nothing. First, because a jury in London cannot decide upon the fact of pub-

Digitized by Google

lishing beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of London, and therefore the work may be republished over and over again in every county in the nation, and every case must have a separate process; and by the time that three or four hundred prosecutions have been had the eyes of the nation will then be fully open to see that the work in question contains a plan the best calculated to root out all the abuses of government, and to lessen the taxes of the nation upwards of *six millions annually.*

" Secondly, because though the gentlemen of London may be very expert in understanding their particular professions and occupations, and how to make business contracts with governments beneficial to themselves as individuals, the rest of the nation may not be disposed to consider them sufficiently qualified nor authorised to determine for the whole nation on plans of reforms, and on systems and principles of government. This would be in effect to erect a jury into a national convention, instead of electing a convention, and to lay a precedent for the probable tyranny of

Digitized by Google

juries, under the pretence of supporting their rights.

" That the possibility always exists of packing juries will not be denied; and therefore in all cases where government is the prosecutor, more especially in those where the right of public discussion and investigation of principles and systems of government is attempted to be suppressed by a verdict, or in those where the object of the work that is prosecuted is the reform of abuse, and the abolition of sinecure places and pensions, in all these cases the verdict of a jury will itself become a subject of discussion; and therefore it furnishes an additional reason for discontinuing the prosecution against the publisher, more especially as it is not a secret that there has been a negociation with him for secret purposes, and for proceeding against me only. I shall make a much stronger defence than what I believe the treasury solicitor's agreement with him will permit him to do.

" I believe that Mr. Burke, finding himself defeated, and not being able to make any

Digitized by Google

answer to the 'Rights of Man,' has been one of the promoters of this prosecution; and I shall return the compliment to him by shewing, in a future publication, that he has been a masked pensioner at £1500 per annum for about ten years.

"Thus it is that the public money is wasted, and the dread of public investigation is produced,

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"To
Sir A. Macdonald, att.-gen. "THOMAS PAINE."

This letter was written previous to Mr. Paine's quitting England, and is, the writer believes, the only letter he ever wrote to Sir Archibald Macdonald.

It is the more necessary to state this as a letter said to be Mr. Paine's was read on his trial; a letter calculated to make much

Digitized by Google

against him, and which was no doubt, as Mr. Erskine asserted, a forged one. This letter, even if genuine, was not evidence, was not charged in the information, and ought not to have made any part in the trial.

Of this letter Mr. Erskine, now Lord Erskine, thus remarked on Mr. Paine's trial :—

" I consider that letter and indeed have " always heard it treated as a forgery, con- " trived to injure the merits of the cause, " and to embarrass me personally in its de- " fence: I have a right so to consider it, " because it is unsupported by any thing " similar at an earlier period. The defen- " dant's whole deportment previous to the " publication has been wholly unexception- " able: he properly desired to be given up " as the author of the book if any enquiry " should take place concerning it; and he " is not affected in evidence, directly or in- " directly, with any illegal or suspicious " conduct, not even with uttering an indis-

Digitized by Google

" creet or taunting expression, nor with any " one matter or thing inconsistent with the " best subject in England.

" His opinions, indeed, were adverse to our " system, but I maintain that opinion is " free, and that conduct alone is amenable to " the law."* As the proclamation which gave rise to the 'Letter to the Addressers' is a curious document, and evinces the temper of the powers that were of that day, it is for the entertainment of the reader here inserted;—

" The London Gazette, published by authority, from Saturday, May 19, to Tuesday, May 22.

" By the King, a Proclamation.

" George R.

" Whereas divers wicked and seditious wri-

* The reader is referred to Mr. Erskine's speech on Mr. Paine's trial, as a most luminous exhibition of just reasoning, sound argument, interesting quotations, and manly eloquence.

Digitized by Google

tings have been printed, published, and industriously dispersed, tending to excite tumult and disorder, by endeavouring to raise groundless jealousies and discontents in the minds of our faithful and loving subjects respecting the laws and happy constitution of government, civil and religious, established in this kingdom, and endeavouring to vilify, and bring into contempt, the wise and wholesome provisions made at the time of the glorious revolution, and since strengthened and confirmed by subsequent laws for the preservation and security of the rights and liberties of our faithful and loving subjects: and whereas divers writings have also been printed, published, and industriously dispersed, recommending the said wicked and seditious publications to the attention of all our faithful and loving subjects: and whereas we have also reason to believe that correspondencies have been entered into with sundry persons in foreign parts with a view to forward the criminal and wicked purposes above mentioned: and whereas the wealth, happiness and prosperity of this kingdom do, under divine providence, chiefly depend upon

Digitized by Google

a due submission to the laws, a just confidence in the integrity and wisdom of parliament, and a continuance of that zealous attachment to that government and constitution of the kingdom which has ever prevailed in the minds of the people thereof: and whereas there is nothing which we so so earnestly desire as to secure the public peace and prosperity, and to preserve to all our loving subjects the full enjoyment of their rights and liberties, both religious and civil; We, therefore, being resolved, as far as in us lies, to repress the wicked and seditious practices aforesaid, and to deter all persons from following so pernicious an example, have thought fit, by the advice of our privy council, to issue this our Royal Proclamation, solemnly warning all our loving subjects, as they tender their own happiness, and that of their posterity, to guard against all such attempts, which aim at the subversion of all regular government within this kingdom, and which are inconsistent with the peace and order of society: and earnestly exhorting them at all times, and to the utmost of their power, to avoid and discourage all proceedings, tending to produce tumults and

Digitized by Google

riots: and we do strictly charge and command all our magistrates in and throughout our kingdom of Great Britain, that they do make diligent inquiry, in order to discover the authors and printers of such wicked and seditious writings as aforesaid, and all others who shall disperse the same: and we do further charge and command all our sheriffs, justices of the peace, chief magistrates in our cities, boroughs, and corporations, and all other our officers and magistrates throughout our kingdom of Great Britain, that they do, in their several and respective stations, take the most immediate and effectual care to suppress and prevent all riots, tumults and other disorders, which may be attempted to be raised or made by any person or persons, which, on whatever pretext they may be grounded, are not only contrary to law, but dangerous to the most important interests of this kingdom: and we do further require and command all and every our magistrates aforesaid that they do from time to time transmit to one of our principal secretaries of state due and full information of such persons as shall be found offending as aforesaid, or in any degree aid-

Digitized by Google

ing or abetting therein: it being our determination, for the preservation of the peace and happiness of our faithful and loving subjects, to carry the laws vigorously into execution against such offenders as aforesaid.— Given at our Court at the Queen's House, the twenty-first day of May, One thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, in the thirty-second year of our reign. — God save the king."

Soon after this, his excellent Letters to Lord Onslow, to Mr. Dundas, and the Sheriff of Sussex were published.

Mr. Paine's trial for the second part of 'Rights of Man' took place on the 18th of December 1792, and he being found guilty the booksellers and publishers who were taken up and imprisoned previously to this trial forebore to stand one themselves, and suffered judgment to go by default; for which they received the sentence of three years imprisonment each. Of these booksellers and publishers I was one, but by flying to France I eluded this merciful sentence.

Digitized by Google

On the subject of these prosecutions I wrote to Mr. Fox, whom I well knew; and my intimate friend for years, Lord Stanhope, as I was myself the subject of two of them, and was well acquainted with the party factions of the day, and the iniquitous intrigues of the opposing leaders, in and out of office; for the writings of Mr. Paine which were as broad as the universe, and having nothing to do with impure elections and auger-hole politics, gave equal offence to all sides.

In the course of these letters which are still extant, it was impossible not to dwell on the absurdity of trial by jury in matters of opinion, and the folly of any body of men deciding for others in science and speculative discussion, in politics and religion. Is it not applying the institution of juries to purposes for which they were not intended, to set up twelve men to judge and determine for a whole nation on matters that relate to systems and principles of government? A matter of fact may be cognizable by a jury, and certainly ascertained with respect to offences against common law and

Digitized by Google

in the ordinary intercourses of society; but on matters of political opinion, of taste, of metaphysical enquiry, and of religious belief, every one must be left to decide as his enquiries, his experience, and his conviction impel him.

If the arm of power in every country and on every doctrine could have enforced its tyranny, almost all we now possess, and that is valuable, would have been destroyed; and if all the governments and factions that have made the world miserable could have had their way, every thing desirable in art, science, philosophy, literature, politics, and religion, would have been by turns obliterated; and the Bible, the Testament, the Alcoran, the writings of Locke, Erasmus Helvetius, Mercier, Milton, Shakspeare, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Swift, Bolanger, Hume, Penn, Tucker, Paine, Bacon, Bolingbroke, and of thousands of others on all sides, would have been burnt; nor would there be a printing press in the world.

It has happened happily for many years

Digitized by Google

past, thanks to the art of printing and the means adopted to crush the circulation of knowledge, that the very modes employed to accomplish this end have not only proved abortive, but have given wings to truth, and diffused it into every corner of the universe. The publication of trials containing quotations from the works to be put down have disseminated their contents infinitely wider than they would else have reached, and have excited enquiries that would otherwise have lain dormant.

So ludicrously did this strike Mr. Paine that his frequent toast was, "The best way of advertising good books,—by prosecution."

As the attorney-general's attacks upon prosecuted works of a clever and profound description, and the judges' charges upon them contain nothing like argument or refutation, but follow up the criminating and absurd language of the indictment or ex-officio information,* and breathe only declamation and

* The reader is referred to these documents as well

Digitized by Google

ignorant abuse, they by their weakness expose the cause they espouse, and strengthen the truths they affect to destroy.

I shall close these observations by quoting two old and good-humoured lines.

> **Treason does never prosper—what's the reason?**
> **When it prospers—it is never treason!**

This trial of Mr. Paine, and these sentences, subverted of course the very ends they were intended to effect.

Mr. Paine was acknowledged deputy for Calais, the 21st of September, 1792. In France, during the early part of the revolution, his time was almost wholly occupied as a deputy of the convention and as a mem-

---

worth his notice, and as a proof of the truth of these observations: for instance, these informations state that Thomas Paine, being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and evil disposed person, hath, with force of arms, and most wicked cunning, written and published a certain false, scandalous, malicious, and seditious libel; in one part thereof to the tenor and effect following, that is to say—&c. &c.

Digitized by Google

ber of the committee of constitution. His company was now coveted and sought after universally among every description of people, and by many who for some reasons never chose to avow it. With the Earl of Lauderdale, and Dr. Moore, whose company he was fond of, he dined every Friday, till Lord Gower's departure made it necessary for them to quit France, which was early in 1793.

About this period he removed from White's Hotel to one near the Rue de Richelieu, where he was so plagued and interrupted by numerous visitors, and sometimes by adventurers, that in order to have some time to himself he appropriated two mornings in a week for his levee days.* To this indeed he was

* Among these adventurers was a person who called himself Major Lisle: Mr. Paine was at breakfast when he was announced; he stated himself to be lately arrived from Ireland; he was drest in the Irish uniform, and wore a green cockade; he appeared to be a well informed man, and was gentlemanly in his manners, but extremely voluble. He ran over the number of sieges and battles he had been at, and ended with professing a zealous desire to serve the republic, wishing Mr. Paine to give him a letter of recom-

Digitized by Google

extremely averse, from the fuss and formality attending it, but he was nevertheless obliged to adopt it.

Annoyed and disconcerted with a life so contrary to his wishes and habits, and so inimical to his views, he retired to the Faux-bourg St. Dennis, where he occupied part of the hotel that Madame de Pompadour once resided in.

Here was a good garden well laid out, and here too our mutual friend Mr. Choppin occupied apartments: at this residence, which for a town one was very quiet, he lived a life of retirement and philosophical ease, while it was believed he was gone into the country

---

mendation to the minister at war. Mr. Paine was extremely observing, shrewd, and cautious; he treated him with hospitality and politeness, and enquired after some of the leading characters in Ireland, with whom he found the major not at all acquainted; he then recommended him to take the credentials of his services to the military committee, but declined every importunity to interfere himself. This adventurer turned out afterwards to be the notorious Major Semple.

Digitized by Google

for his health, which by this time indeed was much impaired by intense application to business, and by the anxious solicitude he felt for the welfare of public affairs.

Here with a chosen few he unbent himself; among whom were Brissot, the Marquis de Chatelet le Roi of the gallerie de honore, and an old friend of Dr. Franklin's, Bançal, and sometimes General Miranda. His English associates were Christie and family, Mrs. Wolstonecraft, Mr. and Mrs. Stone, &c. Among his American friends were Capt. Imlay, Joel Barlow, &c. &c. to these parties the French inmates were generally invited.

It was about this time a gentleman at Paris thus writes of him to his friend:— "An English lady of our acquaintance, "not less remarkable for her talents than for "her elegance of manners, entreated me to "contrive that she might have an interview "with Mr. Paine. In consequence of this "I invited him to dinner on a day when "we were to be favored with her company.

Digitized by Google

" For above four hours he kept every " one in astonishment and admiration of his " memory, his keen observation of men and " manners, his numberless anecdotes of the " American Indians, of the American war, of " Franklin, Washington, and even of his " Majesty, of whom he told several curious " facts of humour and benevolence. His " remarks on genius and taste can never be " forgotten by those present."

Joel Barlow was many years Mr. Paine's intimate friend, and it was from Mr. Paine he derived much of the great knowledge and acuteness of talent he possessed. Joel Barlow was a great philosopher, and a great poet; but there are spots in the sun, and I instance the following littleness in his conduct as a warning, and to prove how much of honest fame and character is lost by any thing like tergiversation. Joel Barlow has omitted the name of Mr. Paine in his very fine poem ' The Columbiad;' a name essential to the work as the principal founder of the American republic and of the happiness of its citizens. Omitting the name of Mr.

Digitized by Google

Paine in the history of America, and where the amelioration of the human race is so much concerned, is like omitting the name of Newton in writing the history of his philosophy, or that of God when creation is the subject; yet this, Joel Barlow has done, and done so lest the name of Paine combined with his theological opinions should injure the sale of the poem.—Mean and unhandsome conduct!

To remedy this omission, tho not in the fine style of Barlow, the following lines are suggested to be placed at the close of the 425th line in the 5th book, page 157 of his Columbiad:—

A man who hónor'd Albion by his birth,
The wisest, brightest, humblest son of earth;
A man, in every sense that word can mean,
Now started angel-like upon the scene,
Drew forth his pen of reason, truth, and fire,
The land to animate, the troops inspire;
And called that independent spirit forth,
Which gives all bliss to man, and constitutes his worth.

'T was he suggested first, 't was he who plann'd
A separation from the mother land:

Digitized by Google

His 'Common Sense' his 'Crisis' led the way,
To great Columbia's happy perfect day,
And all she has of good or ever may!—

As Euclid clear his various writings shone,
His pen inspired by glorious truth alone,
O'er all the earth diffusing light and life,
Subduing error, ignorance, and strife;
Raised man to just pursuits, to thinking right,
And yet will free the world from woe and falsehood's night;
To this immortal man, to Paine 'twas given,
To metamorphose earth from hell to heaven.

He usually rose about seven, breakfasted with his friend Choppin, Johnson, and two or three other Englishmen, and a Monsieur La Borde, who had been an officer in the ci-devant garde du corps, an intolerable aristocrat, but whose skill in mechanics and geometry brought on a friendship between him and Paine: for the undaunted and distinguished ability and firmness with which he ever defended his own opinions when controverted, do not reflect higher honour upon him than that unbounded liberality towards the opinions of others which constituted such a prominent feature in his character, and which never suffered mere difference of sentiment, whether political or religious, to

Digitized by Google

interrupt the harmonious intercourse of friendship, or impede the interchanges of knowledge and information.

After breakfast he usually strayed an hour or two in the garden, where he one morning pointed out the kind of spider whose web furnished him with the first idea of constructing his iron bridge; a fine model of which, in mahogany, is preserved at Paris.

The little happy circle who lived with him here will ever remember these days with delight: with these select friends he would talk of his boyish days, play at chess, whist, piquet, or cribbage, and enliven the moments by many interesting anecdotes: with these he would play at marbles, scotch hops, battledores, &c. on the broad and fine gravel walk at the upper end of the garden, and then retire to his boudoir, where he was up to his knees in letters and papers of various descriptions. Here he remained till dinner time; and unless he visited Brissot's family, or some particular friend in the evening, which was his frequent custom, he joined again the society of his favorites

Digitized by Google

and fellow-boarders, with whom his conversation was often witty and cheerful, always acute and improving, but never frivolous.

Incorrupt, strait forward, and sincere, he pursued his political course in France, as every where else, let the government or clamor or faction of the day be what it might, with firmness, with clearness, and without a "shadow of turning."

In all Mr. Paine's enquiries and conversations he evinced the strongest attachment to the investigation of truth, and was always for going to the fountain head for information. He often lamented we had no good history of America, and that the letters written by Columbus, the early navigators, and others, to the Spanish court, were inaccessible, and that many valuable documents, collected by Philip the IId, and deposited with the national archives at Simania, had not yet been promulgated. He used to speak highly of the sentimental parts of Raynal's History.

It is not intended to enter into an account

Digitized by Google

of the French revolution, its progress, the different colors it took and aspects it assumed. The history of this most important event may be found at large detailed by French writers as well as those of other nations, and the world is left to judge of it.

It is unfortunate for mankind that Mr. Paine, by imprisonment and the loss of his invaluable papers, was prevented giving the best, most candid and philosophical account of these times. These papers contained the history of the French revolution, and were no doubt a most correct, discriminating, and enlightened detail of the events of that important era. For these papers the historian Gibbon sent to France, and made repeated application, upon a conviction that they would be impartial, profound, and philosophical documents.

It is well known that Mr. Paine always lamented the turn affairs took in France, and grieved at the period we are now adverting to, when corrupt influence was rapidly infecting every department of the state. He saw the jealousies and animosities that were breeding,

Digitized by Google

and that a turbulent faction was forming among the people that would first enslave and ultimately overwhelm even the convention itself.

Mr. Paine's opinion upon this subject was always the same, and in 1804 he thus speaks it: "With respect to the revolution, it was "begun by good men, on good principles, and "I have ever believed it would have gone "on so had not the provocative interference "of foreign powers distracted it into madness "and sown jealousies among the leaders. The "people of England have now two revolutions, "the American and the French, before them. "Their own wisdom will direct them what to "choose and what to avoid, and in every thing "which relates to their happiness, combined "with the common good of mankind, I wish "them honour and success."

Mr. Paine's memorable speech against the death of the king, is, or ought to be, in every body's hands. It was as follows:

"Citizen President; My hatred and abhor-

Digitized by Google

rence of absolute monarchy are sufficiently known; they originate in principles of reason and conviction, nor, except with life, can they ever be extirpated; but my compassion for the unfortunate, whether friend or enemy, is equally lively and sincere.

" I voted that Louis should be tried, because it was necessary to afford proofs to the world of the perfidy, corruption, and abomination of the French government.

" The infinity of evidence that has been produced exposes them in the most glaring and hideous colours.

" Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that if Louis Capet had been born in an obscure condition, had he lived within the circle of an amiable and respectable neighbourhood, at liberty to practise the duties of domestic life, had he been thus situated I cannot believe that he would have shewn himself destitute of social virtues; we are, in a moment of fermentation like this, naturally little indulgent to his vices, or rather to those of his government; we regard

Digitized by Google

them with additional horror and indignation; not that they are more heinous than those of his predecessors, but because our eyes are now open, and the veil of delusion at length withdrawn; yet the lamentable degraded state to which he is actually reduced is surely far less imputable to him than to the constituent assembly which, of its own authority, without consent or advice of the people, restored him to the throne.

" I was present at the time of the flight or abdication of Louis XVI, and when he was taken and brought back. The proposal of restoring to him the supreme power struck me with amazement; and although at that time I was not a citizen, yet as a citizen of the world I employed all the efforts that depended on me to prevent it.

" A small society, composed only of five persons, two of whom are now members of the convention, took at that time the name of the Republican Club (Société Republicaine). This society opposed the restoration of Louis, not so much on account of his personal offences, as in order to overthrow monarchy, and to erect on

Digitized by Google

its ruins the republican system and an equal representation.

" With this design I traced out in the English language certain propositions which were translated, with some trifling alteration, and signed by Achilles Duchelclet, lieutenant-general in the army of the French republic, and at that time one of the five members which composed our little party; the law requiring the signature of a citizen at the bottom of each printed paper.

" The paper was indignantly torn by Malonet, and brought forth in this very room as an article of accusation against the person who had signed it, the author, and their adherents; but such is the revolution of events that this paper is now revived, and brought forth for a very opposite purpose.

" To remind the nation of the error of that unfortunate day, that fatal error of not having then banished Louis XVI from its bosom, the paper in question was conceived in the following terms; and I bring it forward this day

Digitized by Google

to plead in favor of his exile preferably to his death.

" ' Brethren, and fellow Citizens: The serene ' tranquillity, the mutual confidence which pre- ' vailed amongst us during the time of the late ' king's escape, the indifference with which we ' beheld him return, are unequivocal proofs that ' the absence of the king is more desirable than ' his presence, and that he is not only a political ' superfluity but a grievous burthen pressing hard ' on the whole nation.

" ' Let us not be imposed on by sophisms: all ' that concerns this man is reduced to four points. ' He has abdicated the throne in having fled from ' his post. Abdication and desertion are not ' characterized by length of absence, but by ' the single act of flight. In the present in- ' stance the act is every thing, and the time ' nothing.

" ' The nation can never give back its ' confidence to a man who, false to his trust, ' perjured to his oath, conspires a clandestine ' flight, obtains a fraudulent passport, conceals

Digitized by Google

'a king of France under the disguise of a 'valet, directs his course towards a frontier 'covered with traitors and deserters, and evi- 'dently meditates a return into our country 'with a force capable of imposing his own 'despotic laws. Ought his flight to be con- 'sidered as his own act, or the act of those who 'fled with him? Was it a spontaneous resolution 'of his own, or was it inspired into him 'by others? The alternative is immaterial: 'whether fool or hypocrite, idiot or trai- 'tor, he has proved himself equally un- 'worthy of the vast and important functions 'that had been delegated to him.

"'In every sense that the question can be 'considered the reciprocal obligations which 'subsisted between us are dissolved. He holds 'no longer authority; we owe him no longer 'obedience; we see in him no more than an 'indifferent person; we can regard him only 'as Louis Capet.

"'The history of France presents little 'else than a long series of public calamity 'which takes its source from the vices of her

Digitized by Google

'kings: we have been the wretched victims 'that have never ceased to suffer either for 'them or by them. The catalogue of their 'oppressions was complete, but to complete 'the sum of their crimes treason was yet 'wanting; now the only vacancy is filled up, 'the dreadful list is full; the system is ex-'hausted; there are no remaining errors for 'them to commit, their reign is consequently 'at an end.

" 'As to the personal safety of Mr. Louis 'Capet, it is so much the more confirmed, as 'France will not stop to degrade herself by a 'spirit of revenge against a wretch who has 'dishonored himself. In defending a just and 'glorious cause it is not possible to degrade it; 'and the universal tranquillity which prevails is 'an undeniable proof that a free people know 'how to respect themselves.'

" Having thus explained the principles and exertions of the republicans at that fatal period when Louis was reinstated in full possession of the executive power which by his flight had been suspended, I return to the

Digitized by Google

subject, and to the deplorable condition in which the man is now actually involved. What was neglected at the time of which I have been speaking has been since brought about by the force of necessity.

" The wilful treacherous defects in the former constitution have been brought to light, the continual alarm of treason and conspiracy rouzed the nation and produced eventfully a second revolution. The people have beat down royalty, never, never to rise again; they have brought Louis Capet to the bar, and demonstrated in the face of the whole world, the intrigues, the cabals, the falsehood, corruption, and rooted depravity of his government: there remains then only one question to be considered, what is to be done with this man?

" For myself, I freely confess that when I reflect on the unaccountable folly that restored the executive power to his hands, all covered as he was with perjuries and treason, I am far more ready to condemn

Digitized by Google

the constituent assembly than the unfortunate prisoner Louis Capet.

" But, abstracted from every other consideration, there is one circumstance in his life which ought to cover or at least to palliate a great number of his transgressions, and this very circumstance affords the French nation a blessed occasion of extricating itself from the yoke of its kings without defiling itself in the impurities of their blood.

" It is to France alone, I know that the United States of America owe that support which enabled them to shake off an unjust and tyrannical yoke. The ardour and zeal which she displayed to provide both men and money were the natural consequences of a thirst for liberty. But as the nation at that time, restrained by the shackles of her own government, could only act by means of a monarchical organ, this organ, whatever in other respects the object might be, certainly performed a good, a great action.

Digitized by Google

" Let then these United States be the safeguard and asylum of Louis Capet. There, hereafter, far removed from the miseries and crimes of royalty, he may learn, from the constant aspect of public prosperity, that the true system of government consists in fair, equal, and honourable representation. In relating this circumstance, and in submitting this proposition, I consider myself as a citizen of both countries.

" I submit it as a citizen of America who feels the debt of gratitude which he owes to every Frenchman. I submit it also as a man who cannot forget that kings are subject to human frailties. I support my proposition as a citizen of the French republic, because it appears to me the best, the most politic measure that can be adopted.

" As far as my experience in public life extends I have ever observed that the great mass of the people are invariably just, both in their intentions and in their objects; but the true method of accomplishing that effect,

Digitized by Google

does not always shew itself in the first instance. For example, the English nation had groaned under the despotism of the Stuarts. Hence Charles the Ist lost his life; yet Charles the IId was restored to all the full plenitude of power which his father had lost. Forty years had not expired when the same family strove to re-establish their ancient oppression; so the nation then banished from its territories the whole race. The remedy was effectual: the Stuart family sunk into obscurity, confounded itself with the multitude, and is at length extinct.

" The French nation has carried her measures of government to a greater length. France is not satisfied with exposing the guilt of the monarch, she has penetrated into the vices and horrors of the monarchy. She has shewn them clear as daylight and for ever crushed that system; and he, whoever he may be, that should ever dare to reclaim those rights, would be regarded not as a pretender, but punished as a traitor.

" Two brothers of Louis Capet have

Digitized by Google

banished themselves from the country, but they are obliged to comply with the spirit and etiquette of the courts where they reside.

" They can advance no pretensions on their own account so long as Louis shall live.

" The history of monarchy in France was a system pregnant with crimes and murders, cancelling all natural ties, even those by which brothers are united. We know how often they have assassinated each other to pave a way to power. As those hopes which the emigrants had reposed in Louis XVI are fled, the last that remains rests upon his death, and their situation inclines them to desire this catastrophe, that they may once again rally round a more active chief, and try one further effort under the fortune of the ci-devant Monsieur and d'Artois. That such an enterprise would precipitate them into a new abyss of calamity and disgrace it is not difficult to foresee; yet it might be attended with mutual loss, and it is our duty as legislators not to spill a drop of blood when our purpose may be effectually accom-

Digitized by Google

plished without it. It has been already proposed to abolish the punishment of death, and it is with infinite satisfaction that I recollect the humane and excellent oration pronounced by Robespierre on that subject in the constituent assembly. This cause must find its advocates in every corner where enlightened politicians and lovers of humanity exist, and it ought above all to find them in this assembly.

" Bad governments have trained the human race and inured it to the sanguinary arts and refinements of punishment; and it is exactly the same punishment that has so long shocked the sight and tormented the patience of the people which now in their turn they practise in revenge on their oppressors.

" But it becomes us to be strictly on our guard against the abomination and perversity of such examples. As France has been the first of European nations to amend her government, let her also be the first to abolish the punishment of death, and to find out a milder and more effectual substitute.

Digitized by Google

" In the particular case now under consideration, I submit the following propositions.—1st. That the national convention shall pronounce the sentence of banishment on Louis and his family: 2nd. That Louis Capet shall be detained in prison till the end of the war, and then the sentence of banishment to be executed."

His conduct in this instance as well as that towards Captain Grimstone display that humane, charitable, and truly benevolent spirit which uniformly marked his character and influenced his conduct.

On the day of the trial of Marat, Mr. Paine dined at White's Hotel with Mr. Milnes, a gentleman of great hospitality and profusion, who usually gave a public dinner to twenty or thirty gentlemen once a week. At table, among many others besides Mr. Paine, was a Captain Grimstone, a lineal descendant from Sir Harbottle Grimstone, who was a member of Cromwell's parliament and an officer in his army. This man was a high aristocrat, a great gambler, and it was believed could not quit

Digitized by Google

France on account of his being much in debt. He took little pains to conceal his political principles, and when the glass had freely circulated, a short time after dinner he attempted loudly and impertinently to combat the political doctrines of the philosopher: this was to be sure the viper biting at the file. Mr. Paine in few words, with much acuteness and address, continued exposing the fallacy of his reasoning, and rebutting his invectives.

The captain became more violent, and waxed so angry, that at length rising from his chair he walked round the table to where Mr. Paine was sitting, and here began a volley of abuse, calling him incendiary, traitor to his country, and struck him a violent blow that nearly knocked him off his seat. Captain Grimstone was a stout young man about thirty, and Mr. Paine at this time nearly sixty.

The company, who suspected not such an outrage against every thing decent, mannerly, and just, and who had occasion frequently during dinner to call him to order, were now obliged to give him in charge of the national

Digitized by Google

guard. It must be remembered that an act of the convention had made it death to strike a deputy, and every one in company with the person committing the assault refusing to give up the offender was considered as an accomplice.

But a short period before this circumstance happened nine men had been decapitated, one of whom had struck Bourdeur de L'oise, at Orleans. The other eight were walking with him in the street at the time.

Paine was extremely agitated when he reflected on the danger of his unprovoked enemy, and immediately applied to Barrere, at that time president of the committee of public safety, for a passport for the unhappy man, who must otherwise have suffered death; and tho he found the greatest difficulty in effecting this, he however persevered and at length accomplished it, at the same time sending Grimstone money to defray his travelling expences; for his passport was of so short a duration that he was obliged to go immediately from his prison to the messagerie nationale.

Digitized by Google

Of Mr. Paine's arrest by Robespierre and his imprisonment, &c. we cannot be so well informed as by himself in his own affecting and interesting letters.

" When I was voted out of the French " convention the reason assigned for it was that " I was a foreigner. When Robespierre had " me seized in the night and imprisoned in " the Luxembourg (where I remained eleven " months) he assigned no reason for it. But " when he proposed bringing me to the tri- " bunal, which was like sending me at once " to the scaffold, he then assigned a reason; " and the reason was, ' for the interest of " ' America as well as France' — ' pour l'intérêt " ' de l'Amerique autant que de la France.' The " words are in his own hand-writing and re- " ported to the convention by the committee " appointed to examine his papers, and are " printed in their report, with this reflection " added to them, ' Why Thomas Paine more " ' than another? because he contributed to " ' the liberty of both worlds?' There must " have been coalition in sentiment, if not in " fact, between the terrorists of America and

Digitized by Google

" the terrorists of France, and Robespierre
" must have known it or he could not have
" had the idea of putting America into the
" bill of accusation against me.

" Yet these men, these terrorists of the new
" world, who were waiting in the devotion of
" their hearts for the joyful news of my
" destruction, are the same banditti who are
" now bellowing in all the hackneyed language
" of hackneyed hypocrisy about humanity and
" piety, and often about something they call
" infidelity, and they finish with the chorus of
" crucify him, crucify him. I am become so
" famous among them that they cannot eat or
" drink without me. I serve them as a stand-
" ing dish, and they cannot make up a bill of
" fare if I am not in it.

" Thomas Paine, to their mortification, Pro-
" vidence has protected in all his dangers,
" patronized him in all his undertakings, en-
" couraged him in all his ways, and rewarded
" him at last by bringing him in health and
" safety to the promised land. This is more
" than it did by the Jews, the chosen people

Digitized by Google

" whom they tell us it brought out of the land
" of Egypt and out of the house of bondage;
" for they all died in the wilderness and Moses
" too. I was one of the nine members that
" composed the first committee of constitution.
" Six of them have been destroyed; Sieyes and
" myself have survived. He by bending with
" the times, and I by not bending. The other
" survivor joined Robespierre and signed with
" him the warrant for my arrestation.

" After the fall of Robespierre he was seized
" and imprisoned in his turn, and sentenced to
" transportation. He has since apologized to me
" for having signed the warrant by saying he
" felt himself in danger and was obliged to do it.

" Herault Sechelles, an acquaintance of Mr.
" Jefferson's, and a good patriot, was my suppli-
" ant as a member of the committee of constitu-
" tion; that is, he was to supply my place if I
" had not accepted or had resigned, being next
" in number of votes to me. He was imprisoned
" in the Luxembourg with me, was taken to the
" tribunal and to the guillotine, and I, his prin-
" cipal, was left.

Digitized by Google

" There were but two foreigners in the con-
" vention, Anarcharsis Cloots and myself. We
" were both put out of the convention by the
" same vote, arrested by the same order, and
" carried to prison together the same night. He
" was taken to the guillotine, and I was again
" left. Joel Barlow was with us when we went
" to prison. Joseph Leban, one of the vilest
" characters that ever existed, and who made
" the streets of Arras run with blood, was my
" suppliant member of the convention for the
" department of the Pais de Calais. When I
" was put out of the convention he came and
" took my place. When I was liberated
" from prison and voted again into the conven-
" tion he was sent to the same prison and took
" my place there, and he went to the guillotine
" instead of me. He supplied my place all the
" way thro. One hundred and sixty-eight per-
" sons were taken out of the Luxembourg in one
" night, and a hundred and sixty of them guillo-
" tined the next day, of which I know I was to
" have been one; and the manner I escaped that
" fate is curious, and has all the appearance of
" accident. The room in which I was lodged
" was on the ground floor and one of a long

Digitized by Google

" range of rooms under a gallery, and the door
" of it opened outward and flat against the wall ;
" so that when it was open the inside of the door
" appeared outward, and the contrary when it
" was shut : I had three comrades fellow-prisoners
" with me, Joseph Vanhuile of Bruges, since
" president of the municipality of that town,
" Michael Robins, and Bastini of Louvain.
" When persons by scores and by hundreds were
" to be taken out of prison for the guillotine it
" was always done in the night, and those who
" performed that office had a private mark or
" signal by which they knew what rooms to go
" to, and what number to take.

" We, as I said, were four, and the door of
" our room was marked, unobserved by us, with
" that number in chalk; but it happened, if hap-
" pening is a proper word, that the mark was
" put on the door when it was open and flat
" against the wall, and thereby came on the
" inside when we shut it at night, and the de-
" stroying angel passed it by. A few days after
" this Robespierre fell, and the American ambassa-
" dor arrived and reclaimed me, and invited me
" to his house.

Digitized by Google

"During the whole of my imprisonment, prior "to the fall of Robespierre, there was no time "when I could think my life worth twenty-four "hours; and my mind was made up to meet "its fate. The Americans in Paris went in a "body to the convention to reclaim me, but "without success. There was no party among "them with respect to me. My only hope then "rested on the government of America that it "would remember me.

"But the icy heart of ingratitude, in what-"ever man it is placed, has neither feelings nor "sense of honour. The letter of Mr. Jefferson "has served to wipe away the reproach, and "done justice to the mass of people of "America."

While Mr. Paine was in prison he wrote much of his 'Age of Reason,' and amused himself with carrying on an epistolary correspondence with Lady S*** under the assumed name of 'The Castle in the Air,' and her ladyship answered under the signature of 'The Little Corner of the World.' This correspondence is reported to be extremely beautiful and interesting.

Digitized by Google

At this period a deputation of Americans solicited the release of Thomas Paine from prison; and as this document, and the way in which it is introduced in Mr. Sampson Perry's history of the French revolution, bear much interest, and are highly honourable to Mr. Paine, the deputation, and Mr. Perry, I give it in his own words:

"As an historian does not write in conformity "to the humours or caprice of the day, but looks "to the mature opinions of a future period, so "the humble tracer of these hasty sketches, "though without pretensions himself to live in "after times, is nevertheless at once desirous of "proving his indifference to the unpopularity of "the moment, and his confidence in the justice "posterity will exercise towards one of the "greatest friends of the human race. The author "is the more authorised to pass this eulogium on "a character already sufficiently celebrious, "having had the means and the occasion of "exploring his mind and his qualities, as well "with suspicion as with confidence. The name "of Thomas Paine may excite hatred in some, "and inspire terror in others. It ought to do "neither, he is the friend of all; and it is only

Digitized by Google

" because reason and virtue are not sufficiently
" prevalent, that so many do not love him: he is
" not the enemy of those even who are eager to
" have his fate at their disposal. The time may
" not be far off when they will be glad their
" fate were at his; but the cowardly as well as
" the brave have contributed to fill England
" with dishonour for silently allowing the best
" friends of the human race to be persecuted with
" a virulence becoming the darkest ages only.

" The physical world is in rapid movement,
" the moral advances perhaps as quick; that part
" of it which is dark now will be light; when it
" shall have but half revolved, men and things
" will be seen more clearly, and he will be most
" esteemed by the good who shall have made the
" largest sacrifice to truth and public virtue.
" Thomas Paine was suspected of having checked
" the aspiring light of the public mind by opi-
" nions not suitable to the state France was in.
" He was for confiding more to the pen, and
" doubting the effect of the guillotine.

" Robespierre said, that method would do

Digitized by Google

" 'restore Thomas Paine to the embraces of his
" 'fellow-citizens we offer to pledge ourselves
" 'as securities for his conduct during the short
" 'time he shall remain in France.'"

After his liberation he found a friendly asylum at the American minister's house, Mr. Monroe, now president of the United States; and for some years before Mr. Paine left Paris, he lodged at M. Bonville's, associating occasionally with the great men of the day, Condorcet, Volney, Mercier, Joel Barlow, &c. &c. and sometimes dining with Bonaparte and his generals.*—He now indulged his mechanical turn, and amused himself in bridge and ship modelling, and in pursuing his favorite studies,

---

* When Bonaparte returned from Italy he called on Mr. Paine and invited him to dinner: in the course of his rapturous address to him he declared that a statue of gold ought to be erected to him in every city in the universe, assuring him that he always slept with his book 'Rights of Man' under his pillow, and conjured him to honor him with his correspondence and advice.

This anecdote is only related as a fact. Of the sincerity of the compliment, those must judge who know Bonaparte's principles best.

Digitized by Google

the mathematics and natural philosophy.—"These models," says a correspondent of that time, "exhibit an extraordinary degree not only "of skill but of taste in mechanics, and are "wrought with extreme delicacy entirely by his "own hands. The largest of these, the model "of a bridge, is nearly four feet in length: the "iron-works, the chains, and every other article "belonging to it were forged and manufactured "by himself. It is intended as the model of a "bridge which is to be constructed across the "Delaware, extending 480 feet with only one "arch. The other is to be erected over a narrower "river, whose name I forget, and is likewise a "single arch, and of his own workmanship "excepting the chains, which instead of iron are "cut out of pasteboard, by the fair hand of his "correspondent,'The little Corner of the World,' "whose indefatigable perseverance is extraor-"dinary. He was offered £3000 for these models "and refused it. He also forged himself the "model of a crane of a new description, which "when put together exhibited the power of the "lever to a most surprising degree."

During this time he also published his

Digitized by Google

'Dissertation on first Principles of Government,' his 'Essay on Finance,' his first and second parts of the 'Age of Reason,' his 'Letter to Washington,' his 'Address to the Theophilanthropists,' 'Letter to Erskine,' &c. &c. Poetry too employed his idle hours, and he produced some fine pieces, which the world will probably one day see.

Wearied with the direction things took in France, which he used to say, was "the promised land, but not the land of promise," he had long sighed for his own dear America.

"It is,"* he would say, "the country of "my heart and the place of my political and

---

* See 'Letters from Thomas Paine to the Citizens of America,' after an absence of fifteen years in Europe, to which are subjoined some letters between him and the late General Washington, Mr. Samuel Adams, and the late President of the United States, Mr. Jefferson; also some original Poetry of Mr. Paine's, and a Fac Simile of his hand-writing in 1803. London: published by and for Clio Rickman, Upper Mary-le-bone-Street, London.

Digitized by Google

" literary birth. It was the American revolution " made me an author, and forced into action the " mind that had been dormant and had no wish " for public life, nor has it now." Mr. Paine made many efforts to cross the Atlantic, but they were ineffectual: some of these I state in his own words. " As soon as the American ambassador " had made a good standing with the French " government, (for the conduct of his prede- " cessor had made his reception as minister diffi- " cult,) he wanted to send dispatches to his own " government, by a person to whom he could also " confide a verbal communication, and he fixed " his choice upon me. He then applied to the " committee of public safety for a passport, but " as I had been voted again into the convention " it was only the convention that could give " the passport; and as an application to them for " that purpose would have made my going " publicly known, I was obliged to sustain " the disappointment, and the then ambassador " to lose the opportunity.

" When that gentleman left France to return " to America, I was to have come with him: " it was fortunate I did not. The vessel he

Digitized by Google

" sailed in was visited by an English frigate
" that searched every part of it, and down to
" the hold, for Thomas Paine. I then went the
" same year to embark for Havre; but several
" British frigates were cruizing in sight of the
" port, who knew I was there, and I had to
" return again to Paris. Seeing myself thus cut
" off from every opportunity of returning that
" was in my power to command, I wrote to Mr.
" Jefferson, requesting that if the fate of the
" election should put him in the chair of the
" presidency, and he should have occasion to
" send a frigate to France, he would give me
" an opportunity of returning by it, which he
" did; but I declined coming by the Maryland,
" the vessel that was offered me, and waited
" for the frigate that was to bring the new
" minister, Mr. Chancellor Livington, to France;
" but that frigate was ordered to the Mediter-
" ranean; and as at that time the war was
" over, and the British cruizers called in, I
" could come any way, I then agreed to come
" with Commodore Barney in a vessel he had
" engaged. It was again fortunate I did not,
" for the vessel sunk at sea, and the people were
" preserved in a boat."

Digitized by Google

" Had half the number of evils befallen me " that the number of dangers amount to through " which I have been preserved, there are those " who would ascribe it to the wrath of heaven; " why then do they not ascribe my preservation " to the protecting favour of heaven? Even in " my worldly concerns I have been blessed. " The little property I left in America, and " which I cared nothing about, not even to " receive the rent of it, has been increasing in " the value of its capital more than eight hun- " dred dollars every year for the fourteen years " and more that I have been absent from it. I " am now in my circumstances independent, " and my economy makes me rich.

"As to my health it is perfectly good, and I " leave the world to judge of the stature of my " mind."

In July 1802, Mr. Jefferson, the then president of America, in a letter to Mr. Paine writes thus:

" You express a wish in your letter to " return to America by a national ship.

Digitized by Google

"Mr. Dawson, who brings over the treaty, "and who will present you this letter, is charged "with orders to the captain of the Maryland, "to receive and accommodate you back if you "can be ready to return at such a short warning. "You will in general find us returned to senti- "ments worthy of former times: in these it "will be your glory to have steadily laboured, "and with as much effect as any man living. "That you may live long to continue your "useful labours, and reap the reward in the "thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer. "Accept the assurance of my high esteem and "affectionate attachment.

"THOMAS JEFFERSON."

"Washington, July 1802."

By the Maryland, as Mr. Paine states, he did not go; and it was not till the 1st of September 1802, after spending some time with him at Havre de Grace, that I took leave of him on his departure for America, in a ship named the London Pacquet, just ten years after his leaving my house in London. This parting gave rise to the following extempore stanzas:

Digitized by Google

STANZAS,

WRITTEN ON THE BEACH AT HAVRE DE GRACE,

AND ADDRESSED TO THE

SEA.

" A generous friendship no cold medium knows."—POPE.

Thus smooth be thy waves, and thus gentle the breeze,
As thou bearest my PAINE far away;
O! waft him to comfort and regions of ease,
Each blessing of friendship and freedom to seize,
And bright be his setting sun's ray.

May AMERICA hail her preserver and friend,
Whose 'COMMON SENSE' taught her aright,
How liberty thro her domains to extend,
The means to acquire each desirable end,
And fill'd her with reason and light.

One champion of all that is glorious and good
Will greet him sincerely I know;
No supporter of craft, of oppression, and blood,
The defender of liberty long he has stood;
Of tyranny only the foe.

Yes JEFFERSON! well in his principles school'd,
Will embrace him with gladness of heart;
His value he knows and is not to be fool'd,
Nor his wisdom and knowledge one moment o'er ruled,
By falsehood, corruption, and art.

Digitized by Google

Tho bitter, dear PAINE, is this parting to me,
I rejoice that from EUROPE once more,
From FRANCE too, unworthy thy talents and thee,
Thou art hastening to join the happy and free;
May the breezes blow gently, and smooth be the sea
That speed thee to LIBERTY'S shore!

The ardent desire which Mr. Paine ever had to retire to and dwell in his beloved America is strongly pourtrayed in the following letter to a female friend in that country, written some years before.

" You touch me on a very tender point " when you say that my friends on your " side of the water cannot be reconciled to " the idea of my abandoning America even " for my native England.

" They are right, I had rather see my " horse Button eating the grass of Borden- " town or Morisania, than see all the pomp " and shew of Europe.

" A thousand years hence, for I must " indulge a few thoughts, perhaps in less, " America may be what Europe now is. " The innocence of her character that won

Digitized by Google

" the hearts of all nations in her favour may
" sound like a romance, and her inimitable
" virtue as if it had never been.

" The ruins of that liberty for which
" thousands bled may just furnish materials
" for a village tale, or extort a sigh from
" rustic sensibility, whilst the fashionable of
" that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall de-
" ride the principles and deny the fact.

" When we contemplate the fall of em-
" pires and the extinction of the nations of
" the ancient world we see but little more
" to excite our regret than the mouldering
" ruins of pompous palaces, magnificent mo-
" numents, lofty pyramids, and walls and tow-
" ers of the most costly workmanship; but
" when the empire of America shall fall, the
" subject for contemplative sorrow will be in-
" finitely greater than crumbling brass or
" marble can inspire. It will not then be
" said, here stood a temple of vast antiquity,
" here rose a babel of invisible height, or
" there a palace of sumptuous extravagance;
" but here (ah! painful thought!) the noblest

Digitized by Google

" work of human wisdom, the grandest scene " of human glory, and the fair cause of " freedom, rose and fell! Read this, and then " ask if I forget America."

There is so uncommon a degree of interest, and that which conveys an idea of so much heart intercourse in this letter, that the reader may be led to desire some knowledge of the person to whom it was addressed. This lady's name was I believe Nicholson, and afterwards the wife of Colonel Few; between her and Mr. Paine a very affectionate attachment and sincere regard subsisted, and it was no small mortification on his final return to New York to be totally neglected by her and her husband.

But against the repose of Mr. Paine's dying moments there seems to have been a conspiracy, and this lady after years of disregard and inattention sought Mr. Paine on his death bed.

Mr. Few was with her, but Mr. Paine, refusing to shake hands with her, said firmly

Digitized by Google

and very impressively, " You have neglected " me, and I beg you will leave the room."

Mrs. Few went into the garden, and wept bitterly.

Of Mr. Paine's reception in America and some interesting account of his own life and its vicissitudes, his 'Letters to the Citizens of America,' before noticed, speak better than I can.

These letters, under the care of Mr. Monroe, he sent me in 1804, and I published them, with the following one of his own accompanying them.

" My dear Friend,

" Mr. Monroe, who is appointed mi- " nister extraordinary to France, takes charge " of this, to be delivered to Mr. Este, banker " in Paris, to be forwarded to you.

" I arrived at Baltimore 30th of October, " and you can have no idea of the agitation " which my arrival occasioned. From New

Digitized by Google

" Hampshire to Georgia, (an extent of 1500
" miles) every newspaper was filled with ap-
" plause or abuse.

" My property in this country has been
" taken care of by my friends, and is now
" worth six thousand pounds sterling; which
" put in the funds will bring me £400
" sterling a year.

" Remember me in friendship and affec-
" tion to your wife and family, and in the
" circle of our friends.

" I am but just arrived here, and the
" minister sails in a few hours, so that I
" have just time to write you this. If he
" should not sail this tide I will write to my
" good friend Col. Bosville, but in any case
" I request you to wait on him for me.

" Your's in friendship,

" THOMAS PAINE."

What course he meant to pursue in America, his own words will best tell, and best

Digitized by Google

characterize his sentiments and principles: they are these:

" As this letter is intended to announce " my arrival to my friends, and my enemies " if I have any, for I ought to have none in " America, and as introductory to others " that will occasionally follow, I shall close " it by detailing the line of conduct I shall " pursue.

" I have no occasion to ask, nor do I " intend to accept, any place or office in the " government.

" There is none it could give me that " would in any way be equal to the profits " I could make as an author (for I have an " established fame in the literary world) could " I reconcile it to my principles to make " money by my politics or religion; I must " be in every thing as I have ever been, a " disinterested volunteer: my proper sphere " of action is on the common floor of citizen- " ship, and to honest men I give my hand " and my heart freely.

Digitized by Google

" I have some manuscript works to publish,
" of which I shall give proper notice, and some
" mechanical affairs to bring forward, that will
" employ all my leisure time.

" I shall continue these letters as I see
" occasion, and as to the low party prints that
" choose to abuse me, they are welcome; I
" shall not descend to answer them. I have
" been too much used to such common stuff to
" take any notice of it.

" THOMAS PAINE."

" City of Washington."

From this period to the time of his death, which was the 9th of June 1809, Mr. Paine lived principally at New York, and on his estate at New Rochelle; publishing occasionally some excellent things in the Aurora Newspaper, also 'An Essay on the Invasion of England,' 'On the Yellow Fever,' 'On Gun-Boats,' &c. &c. and in 1807, 'An Examination of the Passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called Prophecies concerning Jesus Christ,' &c.

Digitized by Google

This is a most acute, profound, clear, argumentative, and entertaining work, and may be considered and is now entitled 'The Third Part of the Age of Reason.'

In the course of Mr. Paine's life, he was often reminded of a reply he once made to this observation of Dr. Franklin's, "Where liberty is, there is my country:" Mr. Paine's retort was, "Where liberty is not, there is my country." And unfortunately he had occasion for many years in Europe to realize the truth of his axiom.

Soon after Mr. Paine's arrival in America he invited over Mr. and Mrs. Bonneville and their children. At Bonneville's house at Paris he had for years found a home, a friendly shelter, when the difficulty of getting supplies of money from America, and other and many ills assailed him. Bonneville and his family were poor, and sunk in the world; Mr. Paine therefore, tho he was not their inmate without remuneration, offered them in return an asylum with him in America. Mrs. Bonneville and her three boys, to whom he was a friend during his life and at his death, soon joined him there. If any part can be

Digitized by Google

marked out as infamous and wicked, in a book full of what is so, it is Cheetham's suggestion upon this just and generous conduct of Mr. Paine's to the Bonneville family, which he attributes to the most base and cowardly motives.

Among other things in 'Cheetham's Life of Mr. Paine' is the assertion that he wrote 'The Commentary on the Eastern Wise Men travelling to Bethlehem guided by a Star,' &c. and 'The Story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,' at Mr. Carver's house at New York. This stands among a large catalogue of other falsehoods, for these and other very pointed satirical poems were given to me some years before this by Mr. Paine in France. The particulars of Mr. Paine's being shot at while sitting by his fire-side at Bordentown is given in his own letters in the appendix, page 224. The bullet from the fire-arm shattered the glass over the chimney-piece very near to him. I find a letter in reply to one of mine, in which he writes "the account you heard of a man's firing into "my house is true—the grand jury found the "bill against him, and he lies over for trial."

Digitized by Google

The latter part of 'Cheetham's Life of Mr. Paine' is taken up in giving letters between him and Carver, at whose house he lodged some time at New York, about domestic and pecuniary differences, trifling and local trash, and in detailing the gossip and nonsensical malevolence of the idle, fanatical, and prejudiced.

As the author of these memoirs well knows and corresponds with Mr. Carver, it is very plain to him that Cheetham has supplied much of the style and matter of Carver's letters, for Mr. Carver was a most strenuous advocate and supporter of Mr. Paine's political and religious principles.

That he and Mr. Paine had some private differences while Mr. Paine was his lodger is true; and it should seem that Cheetham, bent upon giving an erroneous bias to every thing concerning Mr. Paine, stirred up and magnified these differences, and made the letters which Carver really wrote, the vehicle of extraneous, bitter, and false matter, which formed no part of the original disagreement between them; in short, Cheetham's work is filled with abuse of a man whose age, for Paine

Digitized by Google

was then past seventy, ought to have been his protection, and might have been offered as an apology at least for some defects and failings when his mind too was depressed under neglect, abuse, and misrepresentation.

In January 1809, Mr. Paine became very feeble and infirm, so much so, as to be scarcely capable of doing any thing for himself.

During this illness he was pestered on every hand with the intrusive and impertinent visits of the bigoted, the fanatic, and the designing. To entertain the reader, some specimens of the conduct of these intruders are here given.

He usually took a nap after dinner, and would not be disturbed let who would call to see him. One afternoon a very old lady dressed in a large scarlet hooded cloak knocked at the door and enquired for Thomas Paine. Mr. Jarvis, with whom Mr. Paine resided, told her he was asleep. I am very sorry she said for that, for I want to see him

Digitized by Google

particularly. Thinking it a pity to make an old woman call twice, Mr. Jarvis took her into Mr. Paine's bed room, and awoke him; he rose upon one elbow, then, with an expression of eye that made the old woman stagger back a step or two, he asked, "What "do you want?" "Is your name Paine?" "Yes." "Well then, I come from Almighty "God to tell you, that if you do not repent "of your sins, and believe in our blessed "saviour Jesus Christ, you will be damned "and"— "Poh, poh, it is not true, you "were not sent with any such impertinent "message; Jarvis, make her go away; pshaw! "he would not send such a foolish ugly old "woman about with his messages; go away, "go back, shut the door." The old lady retired, raised both her hands, kept them so, and without saying another word walked away in mute astonishment.

The following is a curious example of a friendly, neighbourly visit.

About two weeks before his death he was visited by the Rev. Mr. Milledollar, a pres-

Digitized by Google

byterian minister of great eloquence, and the Rev. Mr. Cunningham. The latter gentleman said, "Mr. Paine, we visit you as friends and "neighbours: you have now a full view of "death, you cannot live long, and whoever "does not believe in Jesus Christ will "assuredly be damned." "Let me," said Paine, "have none of your popish stuff; get "away with you, good morning, good "morning." The Rev. Mr. Milledollar attempted to address him but he was interrupted in the same language. When they were gone, he said to Mrs. Hedden, his housekeeper, "do not let them come here "again, they intrude upon me." They soon renewed their visit, but Mrs. Hedden told them they could not be admitted, and that she thought the attempt useless, for if God did not change his mind, she was sure no human power could: they retired. Among others, the Rev. Mr. Hargrove, minister of a new sect called the New Jerusalemites, once accosted him with this impertinent stuff: "My name is Hargrove, sir; I am minister "of the new Jerusalem church; we, sir, ex- "plain the scripture in its true meaning;

Digitized by Google

" the key has been lost these four thousand " years, and we have found it." " Then," said Paine in his own neat way, " it must " have been very rusty."

In his last moments he was very anxious to die, and also very solicitous about the mode of his burial; for as he was completely unchanged in his theological sentiments, he would on no account, even after death, countenance ceremonies he disapproved, containing doctrines and expressions of a belief which he conscientiously objected to, and had spent great part of his life in combatting.

He wished to be interred in the quaker's burying ground, and on this subject he requested to see Mr. Willet Hicks, a member of that society, who called on him in consequence.

Mr. Paine, after the usual salutations, said, " As I am going to leave one place it is " necessary to provide another; I am now " in my seventy-third year, and do not ex-

Digitized by Google

" pect to live long; I wish to be buried in " your burying ground." He said his father was a quaker, and that he thought better of the principles of that society than any other, and approved their mode of burial. This request of Mr. Paine was refused, very much to the discredit of those who did so; and as the quakers are not unused to grant such indulgencies, in this case it seemed to arise from very little and unworthy motives and prejudices, on the part of those who complied not with this his earnest and unassuming solicitation.

The above quaker in some conversation of a serious nature with Mr. Paine, a short time before his death, was assured by him that his sentiments respecting the christian religion were now precisely the same as when he wrote the 'Age of Reason.'

About the 4th of May, symptoms of approaching dissolution became very evident to himself, and he soon fell off his milk-punch, and became too infirm to take any thing; complaining of much bodily pain.

Digitized by Google

On the 8th of June 1809, about 9 in the morning, he placidly, and almost without a struggle, died, as he had lived, a deist.

Why so much consequence should be attached to what is called a recantation in man's last moments of a belief or opinion held thro life, a thing I never witnessed nor knew any one who did, it is difficult to say, at least with any credit, to those who harp so much upon it. A belief or an opinion is none the less correct or true even if it be recanted, and I strenuously urge the reader to reflect seriously, how few there are who really have any fixed belief and conviction thro life of a metaphysical or religious nature; how few who devote any time to such investigation, or who are not the creatures of form, education, and habit; and take upon trust tenets instead of inquiring into their truth and rationality. Indeed it appears that those who are so loud about the recantation of philosophers, are neither religious, moral, or correct themselves, and exhibit not in their own lives, either religion in belief, or principle in conduct.

He was aged 72 years and 5 months. At

Digitized by Google

nine of the clock in the forenoon of the 9th of June, the day after his decease, he was taken from his house at Greenwich, attended by seven persons, to New Rochelle; where he was afterwards interred on his own farm. A stone has been placed at the head of his grave according to the direction in his will, with the following inscription,—

THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF

COMMON SENSE,

Died June 8th 1809, Aged 72 Years and 5 Months.

There is near the close of Cheetham's Life of Mr. Paine a letter of a Doctor Manley's, descriptive of Mr. Paine's illness, and some of his last hours; but it is too evidently the production of a fanatic, who wished to discredit and traduce him, and also who was wrath at his being a deist.

As an instance of the tone of this letter which Cheetham wrote to Manley for, and which was a contrivance between them to slander him, he says, "that his anger was easily kindled, and I doubt not that his resentments were lasting." This libeller of Mr. Paine knew but little of

Digitized by Google

him, and wrote thus on visiting him in a dying state worn down with age, pain, and feebleness.

O shame! where is thy blush!—The visits of Doctor Manley to Mr. Paine in his last moments look very like a contrivance to misrepresent and encourage the notion of his recantation.

Manley's letter is evidently written to answer a purpose among the enemies of Mr. Paine, and has been particularly circulated in a mutilated state, in order generally to impose the idea that Mr. Paine renounced his faith before he died; yet even this letter has the following passage:

Again I addressed him, "Mr. Paine, you "have not answered my questions—will you "answer them? Allow me to ask again, Do "you believe, or let me qualify the question, "Do you wish to believe that Jesus Christ is "the son of God? After a pause of some "minutes he answered, I have no wish to be-"lieve on that subject. I then left him, and "know not whether he afterwards spoke."

Digitized by Google

The reader must from the foregoing pages be persuaded how unkindly teased and obtrusively tormented were the closing hours of Mr. Paine's life; hours that always should be soothed by tenderness, quietude, and every kind attention, and in which the mind generally loses all its strength and energy, and is as unlike its former self as its poor suffering companion the body.

> 'Infirmity doth still neglect all office,
> Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
> When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
> To suffer with the body.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

To a rational man it should seem that a deist, if he be so from principle, and he is as likely to be so as any other religionist, is no more to be expected to renounce his principles on his death-bed or to abandon his belief at that moment, than the Christian, the Jew, the Mahometan, or any other religionist.

It will be seen that Mr. Paine very early, when a mere child, was inspired as it were with the antichristian principles which he held religiously thro life. See page 36, 'Age of Reason.'

Digitized by Google

" From the time I was capable of conceiving " an idea and acting upon it by reflection, I " either doubted the truth of the Christian sys- " tem, or thought it to be a strange affair; I " scarcely knew which it was, but I well " remember, when about seven or eight years of " age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of " mine who was a great devotee of the church " upon the subject of what is called " redemp- " tion, by the death of the son of God."

" After the sermon was ended I went into " the garden, and as I was going down the " garden-steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) " I revolted at the recollection of what I had " heard: it was to me a serious reflection arising " from the idea I had, that God was too good to " do such an action, and also too almighty to " be under any necessity of doing it. I believe " in the same manner to this moment: and I " moreover believe that any system of religion " that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of " a child cannot be a true system."

His philosophical and astronomical pursuits could not but confirm him in the most exalted,

Digitized by Google

the most divine ideas of a supreme being, and in the purity and sublimity of deism.

A belief of millions of millions of inhabited worlds, millions of millions of miles apart, necessarily leads the mind to the worship of a God infinitely above the one described by those religionists who speak and write of him as they do, and as if only the maker of our earth, and as alone interested in what concerns it. In contemplating the immense works of God, 'the creation' is the only book of revelation in which the deist can believe; and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of him in his glorious works, and endeavouring to imitate him in every thing moral, scientifical and mechanical. It cannot be urged too strongly, so much wrong headedness if not wrong heartedness is there on this subject, that the religion of the deist no more precludes the blessed hope of salvation than the christian or any other religion.

We see thro different mediums, and in our pursuits and experience are unlike. How others have felt after reading maturely the 'Age of Reason,' and the 'Rights of Man,' and pur-

Digitized by Google

suing fairly, coolly, and assiduously the subjects therein treated, I leave to them; but for myself I must say, these works carried perfect conviction with them to my mind, and the opinions they contain are fully confirmed by much reading, by long, honest, unwearied investigation and observation.

The best and wisest of human beings both male and female that I have known thro life have been deists, nor did any thing in the shape of their recantation either in life or death ever come to my knowledge, nor can I understand how a real, serious, and long-adopted belief can be recanted.

That Mr. Paine's religious belief had been long established and was with him a deep rooted principle, may be seen by his conduct when imprisoned and extremely ill in the Luxembourg in 1794.*

Mr. Bond, an English surgeon who was confined there at the same time, tho by no

---

* See 'Age of Reason,' part I.

Digitized by Google

means a friend to Mr. Paine's political or theological doctrines, gave me the following testimony of Mr. Paine's sentiments:

"Mr. Paine, while hourly expecting to die, "read to me parts of his 'Age of Reason;' and "every night when I left him to be separately "locked up, and expected not to see him alive "in the morning, he always expressed his firm "belief in the principles of that book, and "begged I would tell the world such were his "dying opinions. He often said that if he lived "he should prosecute further that work, and "print it." Mr. Bond's frequent observation when speaking of Mr. Paine was, that he was the most conscientious man he ever knew.

While upon this subject, it will probably occur to the reader, as well as to the writer, how little belief from inquiry and principle there is in the world; and how much oftener religious profession is adopted from education, form, prudence, fear, and a variety of other motives, than from unprejudiced enquiry, a love truth, of free discussion, and from entire conviction. Reasoning thus, it may fairly be inferred that men like Mr.

Digitized by Google

Paine, a pious deist, of deep research, laborious enquiry, and critical examination, are the most likely from disinterested motives to adopt opinions, and of course the least likely to relinquish them.

Before I quit the subject I give the following authentic document in a letter from New York:

"Sir,

"I witnessed a scene last night which "occasioned sensations only to be felt, not to "be described; the scene I allude to was no "less extraordinary than the beholding the well-"known Thomas Paine struggling to retain a "little longer in connection his soul and body. "For near an hour I sat by the bedside of that "well-known character, to whom I was intro-"duced by one of his friends. Could the me-"mory have retained the suggestions of my "mind in the moments when I was reviewing "the pallid looks of him who had attempted "to overthrow kingdoms and monarchies, of "him who has astonished the world with the "fruits of a vast mind, whose works have

Digitized by Google

" caused a great part of mankind to think and
" feel as they never did before, such suggestions
" would not be uninteresting to you. I could not
" contemplate the approaching dissolution of
" such a man, see him gasping for breath, with-
" out feelings of a peculiar nature. Poor Paine's
" body has given way before his mind which
" is yet firm; mortification seems to have taken
" up its dwelling in his frame, and he will soon
" be no more. With respect to his principles
" he will die as he has lived; they are unaltered.
" Some methodists went to him a few days
" ago to endeavour to make a convert of him,
" but he would not listen to their entreaties."

Soon after Mr. Paine's death the following character of him and his writings appeared in a London news-paper, written by a gentleman well acquainted with him and them:

" He was in his youth of a strong resolution
" and constant temper. He had from his in-
" fancy adopted the opinions he so successfully
" promulgated in his manhood. All his literary
" productions evince an acute, profound, and
" determined mind. His language is simple

Digitized by Google

" and nervous, adapted to all capacities, and so " pointed and unequivocal that there is no mis- " conceiving it. He is sententious, his axioms " are incontrovertible and self-evident, and their " impressions are indelible.

" No human being's efforts have done more " for liberty. He has made more converts than " Sydney and Russell. His 'Common Sense' " enfranchised America. America was divided " between two parties; the arguments of this " little pamphlet decided the contest. His " glorious 'Rights of Man' had nearly a similar " effect in England. Innumerable replies have " been made against it, but so weak and futile as " to injure the cause they were meant to sustain. " He reasoned from facts, and his diction was " irresistible.

" He pours down like a torrent and bears " every thing before him. He was prosecuted " for his works, but they were so admired that " they were in every library. He seemed stern " and morose, but he was lenient, friendly, and " benevolent.

" He instanced his humanity by his resolute

Digitized by Google

" vote to save the king of France, and the san-
" guinary Robespierre never forgave him, and
" in the reign of terror imprisoned him; but
" this apostle of liberty, though in such eminent
" danger, never retracted his opinions, nor im-
" plored mercy. It pleased Providence that he
" should escape this monster. Bold, manly, and
" fearless, he never concealed his sentiments;
" positive and inflexible, they never varied,
" being founded on conviction and pure prin-
" ciples. He remained at Paris long after Bona-
" parte rendered himself supreme in the state,
" and spoke as free as ever. In 1802, he de-
" parted from Paris for his admired America;
" the only true birth-place of liberty, where he
" finished his days in 1809, June 8, at New-
" York, aged 73,

His ashes there,
But his fame every where."

The following advertisement appeared in the New York Advertiser, June 9, 1809:

" Mr. THOMAS PAINE.

" Thy spirit, independence, let me share.
SMOLLETT.

" With heart-felt sorrow and poignant

Digitized by Google

regret we are compelled to announce to the world that Mr. Thomas Paine is no more.

" This distinguished philanthropist, whose life was devoted to the cause of humanity, departed this life yesterday morning; and if any man's memory deserved a place in the breast of a freeman, it is that of the deceased, for

' take him for all in all
' We ne'er shall look upon his like again.'

" The friends of the deceased are invited to attend his funeral by 9 o'clock in the morning, from his late residence at Greenwich, from whence his corpse will be conveyed to New Rochelle for interment;

' His ashes there,
His fame every where.* " "

---

* This quotation, which is a translation from a Latin epitaph on Frederick IIId, thus rendered, would serve very well for Mr. Paine.

In this small compass tho Paine's ashes lie,
His fame is every where, and ne'er shall die.

Digitized by Google

It appears by Mr. Paine's will that he died worth a considerable property. This will is in the latter part of the appendix.

Before I take leave of my reader I would press upon his mind the necessity of candour; and if he be a christian I must tell him he will cease to be so the moment he appeals to coercion and resorts to prosecution and to persecution in matters of belief and opinion: such conduct his own 'New Testament' is decidedly against. It is better not to believe in a God than to believe unworthily of him, and the less we make him after our image the less we blaspheme him. Let enquiry supercede calumny and censure, and let it be ever remembered that those systems in government or religion which will not bear discussion and investigation are not worth solicitude. Ignorance is the only original sin: spread information and knowledge, and virtue and truth will follow. Read I beg you, reader, Lord Bolingbroke's 3rd and 4th chapters "concerning authority in matters of religion;" read the "Letter of Gilbert Wakefield," who was a violent christian, to Sir John

Digitized by Google

Scott, then attorney general, about the year 1798, from which this is an extract:

" What right, I wish to be informed, can " one man claim, distinct from power and " tyranny, and usurpation, to dictate creeds, " and to prescribe sentiments, for another?

" Let us put an extreme case upon this " question, which will abundantly elucidate, " and indubitably decide the controversy: I " mean the publication of ' Paine's Age of " Reason.'

" But I would not forcibly suppress this " book; much less would I punish (O! my " God! be such wickedness far from me: or " leave me destitute of thy favour in the " midst of this perjured and sanguinary gene- " ration!) much less would I punish, by fine " or imprisonment, from any possible consi- " deration, the publisher, or author, of those " pages.

" PRUDENTIAL MOTIVES would prevent " me; because such interdiction serves only to

Digitized by Google

" excite the restless curiosity of mankind;
" and the restraints of law give fresh vigour
" to circulation.

" MOTIVES OF PHILOSOPHY would prevent
" me: because enquiry and discussion are
" hereby provoked; and sparks of truth, which
" would otherwise have been concealed for
" ever, are elicited by the collision of debate;
" to the unspeakable emolument and *illumi-*
" nation of mankind, in the promotion of
" mutual forbearance and esteem, in the fur-
" therance of valuable knowledge, and in
" the consequent propagation of all happiness
" and virtue. Truth can never suffer from
" argument and enquiry; but may be essen-
" tially injured by the tyrannous interference
" of her pretended advocates.

" MOTIVES OF JUSTICE would deter me.
" Why should I refuse another that privilege of
" thinking and writing, which I claim and
" exercise myself?

" MOTIVES OF HUMANITY would deter me.

Digitized by Google

" I should think with horror on the punish-
" ment of any man for his belief; in
" which he has no discretionary power, but
" is necessarily swayed by the controlling
" despotism of arguments and reasons; and at
" what licence or patent shop shall I purchase
" a gag to silence him? Or, what shall hin-
" der him from forming the same unfavour-
" able judgment of my opinions, and pur-
" suing in his turn the same measures of
" intimidation and coercion with myself?

" Thus the fair and goodly creation of
" the Almighty is to be converted into a
" howling wilderness of savage beasts, alter-
" nately hunting and worrying each other.

" Lastly, MOTIVES OF RELIGION would
" deter me from molesting any writer for the
" publication of his sentiments."

Oppose argument to argument, reason to reason, opinion to opinion, book to book, truth must prevail; and that which is of divine origin will bring itself thro. Set not attorney generals and human laws at work,

Digitized by Google

nor pay any religion which boasts an heavenly origin so bad a compliment, or libel its founders, by endeavouring to support it by such infamous means. Suffer me, while on this subject, to re-publish the following

VERSES,

WRITTEN EXTEMPORE

IN THE

CONVENT

AT

MONSERRATE in SPAIN,

1785.

With solemn step, this awful pile I tread,
Nor with indignant eye around me gaze;
Nor view contemptuously the sacred dead,
The bloody cross, and ever burning blaze.

No idle prejudice my soul conceives,
Nor horrid bigotry my bosom feels;
I damn not him, who this or that believes,
Nor care before what saint the good man kneels.

Digitized by Google

Still to the great Jehovah, Lord of all!
In different ways the pious heave the sigh;
Regardless of the mode, he hears their call,
And dries, in every land, the tearful eye.

The honest mind in every varied clime,
Alike demands the approving smile of heaven;
Sincere amendment does away the crime,
And mercy to the contrite heart is given.

Is not the God you worship boundless love?
Say then ye sects of every land and name,
How do you dare his dictates disapprove,
And ever seek each other to defame?

Shall you, who boast a Saviour for your head,
A lord who suffered, died, and bled for all,
Still in your actions contradict his creed,
And wanting candour—low as devils fall! *

---

* The author wishes to be understood, that he only uses the word devils figuratively; he has no faith in their existence really, and he believes, that when mankind find that they do not want wars, and taxes, and a religion to underprop the extravagancies of power by extravagancies of its own, they will discover that they can do very well without devils.

Digitized by Google

Hence, ye profane! of whatsoever tribe,
And perish all the systems that you teach!
In vain you talk, if you have priestly pride,
And wanting charity in vain you preach.

What are your forms, ye Christians, Pagans, Turks?
If vehicles to serve your God, 'tis well;
He heeds not what they are, if good your works,
Nor cares if psalms you sing, or beads you tell.

Serve then sincere that Power who reigns above;
O'er all he holds corrective mercy's rod;
On all, by varying means, pours boundless love,
Then work his will, his goodness haste to prove,—
For all the pure in heart shall see their God.

POETICAL SCRAPS, vol. II. page 135.

How paltry, how detestable, is that criticism, which only seeks to find out and dwell on errors and inaccuracies; passing over in silence, what is grand, sublime, and useful! How still more paltry, and detestable, is that disposition, which seeks only to find out and dwell on the defects and foibles of character!

While Mr. Paine's enemies have laboured,

Digitized by Google

and are still labouring, to detect vices and errors in his life and manners, shall not his friends dwell on the immense good he has done in public life, on the happiness he has created for myriads, in private? Shall they not point to the abodes of delight and comfort, where live and flourish the blessings of domestic bliss; AFFECTION'S dear intercourses, FRIENDSHIP'S solaces, and LOVE'S sacred enjoyments? and there are millions of such abodes originating in his labours. Why seek occasions, surly critics and detractors! to maltreat and misrepresent Mr. Paine? He was mild, unoffending, sincere, gentle, humble, and unassuming; his talents were soaring, acute, profound, extensive, and original; and he possessed that charity, which covers a multitude of sins: but as the following Elegy, published soon after his death, conveying a just character of him, is considered as a more appropriate channel for doing so than prose, I take the liberty to conclude this Life with transcribing it.

Digitized by Google

ELEGY

TO THE

MEMORY OF THOMAS PAINE.

The unconquerable mind, and FREEDOM's holy flame. GRAY.

Acutely throbb'd my bosom, as I stood
On GALLIA's strand, and markt, with tearful eye,
Thy lessening bark that plough'd the briny flood,
Till the last glimpse was lost mid sea and sky.

Yet hope still flutter'd round my aching breast;
And as along our favorite walks I stray'd,
While the bright sun was sinking in the west,
And SEINE her matchless prospects wide display'd:

Or while the moon, holding her high career,
Gleam'd on the sombre woods and glittering main,
While murmuring surges, breaking on the ear,
With melancholy musings mixt their strain—

Fondly I sigh'd, alas!—Tho here no more
Mid NATURE's loveliest scenery we shall prowl,
Nor share again, on HAVRE's charming shore,
"The feast of reason and the flow of soul"—

Digitized by Google

Tho here, mid bowers fit for the MUSE's haunt,
We ne'er shall shape our devious course again;
Ne'er range the hills, the woods, the fields, that slant
Where the broad SEINE majestic meets the main—

Yet will I not despair. The time may come,
When on COLUMBIA's free and happy coast,
With thee once more at large thy friend shall roam,
Once more renew the blessings he has lost.

Thus HOPE still flutter'd round my throbbing breast,
And heal'd the direful wound which parting gave,
Soothed each afflictive feeling into rest,
And like a pitying angel came to save.

And often thus, amid my troublous days—
A life eventful, and of varied hue—
Has HOPE shone on me with benignant rays,
And present evils taught me to subdue.

Fallacious CHARMER! long my soul enjoy'd
The pleasing hope to cross the Atlantic main;
But cruel DEATH the promised bliss destroy'd,
And snatcht, with unrelenting hand, my PAINE.

Cast in superior mould, some nobler souls
Sublimely soar, for great events design'd,
Whom no corruption taints, no vice controls—
Who live to enlighten — live to bless mankind.

Digitized by Google

Wise by some centuries before the crowd,
These, by their systems novel tho correct,
Must still offend the wicked, weak, and proud;
Must meet with hatred, calumny, neglect.

Twas ever thus; and such has been thy fate—
The fate of all, pre-eminent like THEE:
But glory, honour, and renown, tho late
Thy well-deserved, thy sure reward shall be.

Oh! had thy hasty censurers known thee well,
Unbiass'd had they weigh'd thy WORKS and THEE;
Base Calumny had blush'd her tale to tell,
And thousands from this worst of crimes been free—

This CRIME of CRIMES! to damn unheard, unknown,
The lives and labours of the great and true:
Here the malicious slanderer stands alone;
No fouler aim can INFAMY pursue.

What agonies have wrung my indignant breast,
To hear abused the MAN who proudly stood,
Of every talent, every worth possest,
IMMUTABLE AND JUST, AND WISE AND GOOD!

Is WIT a quality to charm the soul?
Is GENIUS dear—is SCIENCE to be loved?
Is REASON, of omnipotent controul,
Man's highest, noblest boast, to be approved?

Digitized by Google

Is all divine PHILOSOPHY, held forth
As every good dispensing to our race,
Spreading philanthropy and taste on earth,
And raising man above the vile and base?

Are strong, romantic, rich, poetic powers—
FANCY, that scatters all the graces round—
And anecdote, that gilds convivial hours—
Talents ACUTE, IMPRESSIVE, and PROFOUND—

Are THESE held dear, and by the bard and sage
Reverenced, esteem'd, and praised, from pole to pole?
Then PAINE must live to every future age,
And IMMORTALITY his name enroll.

For ME, who thus pourtray the man I loved,
No venal motives guide the ardent quill;
For still to ME the fond attachment proved
A source of sufferings, calumny, and ill.

But not the voice of millions, led astray
By party, interest, prejudice, and fear,
Can ever waken in my breast dismay,
Or make me aught but what I am appear.

WORMS OF A DAY! our duty let us do,
And bow to TRUTH, eternal TRUTH alone;
All pride, and selfishness, and strife subdue,
Be kind to others' faults, and mend our own.

Digitized by Google

For ME, I followed where conviction led,
Sought only peace and right, with even course;
Still labour'd that the HEART might guide the HEAD,
And hated enmity, cabal, and force.

And for the dear dear groupe that croud my board,
Celestialize my rambles and fire-side,
For these, my boys and girls, I but implored
That TRUTH, and only TRUTH, might be their guide.

WORMS OF A DAY! it is not worth our while
To live to mental lying, vice, and woe:
Since pomp and splendour deck the paths of guile,
O! let us pomp and splendour still forego.

I've read their works, and known high-minded men,
Whose plaudits by the nations have been rung,
Who've woo'd philosophy, or pour'd the strain,
Or greatly reason'd, or divinely sung.

But these, indeed, to THEE the palm must yield;
Superior gifts, superior powers were thine;
They fade like stars that quit heaven's azure field,
When bright the beams of morn begin to shine.

Twas thine to point the means of human weal,
To rescue man from slavery and crime;
To all his better passions to appeal,
His life ennoble, and his thoughts sublime.

Digitized by Google

Twas THINE his social happiness to plan,
His public blessings, private virtues raise;
And teaching REASON, and the RIGHTS OF MAN,
To all posterity ensure thy praise.

Twas THINE, by works devoted but to TRUTH,
WISDOM and LIFE and LIGHT to spread below;
To lead from jarring creeds, and laws uncouth,
From slavery, superstition, pride, and woe.

Let THESE thy WORKS immortalize thy fame;
Let these to purer times thy praise extend,
Whose grateful sons will hail thy hallow'd name,
Which scarcely found, in times corrupt, a friend.

My boast it is to rank with these, though few;
My pride, this humble tribute to bestow;
To give to WISDOM, VIRTUE, PAINE their due,
This to MYSELF, to THEE, and TRUTH I owe!

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING SOME

ORIGINAL PIECES IN PROSE AND VERSE,

BY

MR. PAINE.

Note.—This little production of Mr. Paine is well worth attention; particularly too when millions have been and are squandering upon useless land fortifications along the coast, and on the works in and about Dover, &c.

The observations of a great man are always deserving of notice; and those which follow carry so complete a conviction of their propriety and truth along with them, that the English reader cannot but be led to reflect on the very opposite plans pursued in protecting our own coasts; if indeed, that may be called protection which we are now adopting.

One thing most recommendatory of gun-boats has, I think, not been sufficiently enlarged upon in Mr. Paine's essay, but which, while we lament that any system of war should be necessary, surely speaks highly in favour of them,

Digitized by Google

viz. that while they protect a nation from insult and are undoubtedly its best defenders, their size renders it impossible for them to go far, and annoy, and attack, and carry conquest, desolation, and misery to distant shores!

ON THE COMPARATIVE POWERS AND EXPENCE OF SHIPS OF WAR, GUN-BOATS, AND FORTIFICATIONS.

The natural defence by men is common to all nations; but artificial defence, as an auxiliary to human strength, must be adapted to the local condition and circumstances of a country.

What may be suitable to one country, or in one state of circumstances, may not be so in another.

The United States have a long line of coast, of more than two thousand miles, every part of which requires defence, because every part is approachable by water.

The right principle for the United States to go upon, as a defence for the coast, is that of combining the greatest practical power with the least possible bulk, that the whole quantity of power may be better distributed through the several parts of such an extensive coast.

Digitized by Google

The power of a ship of war is altogether in the number and size of the guns she carries, for the ship of itself has no power.

Ships cannot struggle with each other like animals; and besides this, as half her guns are on one side of the ship, and half on the other; and as she can use only the guns on one side at a time, her real power is only equal to half her number of guns. A seventy-four can use only thirty-seven guns. She must tack about to bring the other half into action, and while she is doing this she is defenceless and exposed.

As this is the case with ships of war, a question naturally arises therefrom, which is, whether 74 guns, or any other number, cannot be more effectually employed, and that with much less expence, than by putting them all into one ship of such an enormous bulk, that it cannot approach a shore either to defend it or attack it; and though the ship can change its place, the whole number of guns can be only at one place at a time, and only half that number can be used at a time.

This is a true statement of the case between ships of war and gun-boats for the defence of a coast and of towns situated near a coast.

But the case often is, that men are led away by the GREATNESS of an idea, and not by the JUSTNESS of it!

Digitized by Google

This is always the case with those who are advocates for navies and large ships.*

A gun-boat carrying as heavy metal as a ship of 100 guns can carry, is a one-gun ship of the line; and seventy-four of them, which would cost much less than a 74-gun ship would cost, would be able to blow a 74-gun ship out of the water.

They have in the use of their guns double the power of the ship, that is, they have the use of their whole number, of seventy-four to thirty-seven.

Having thus stated the general outlines of the subject, I come to particulars.

That I might have a correct data to go upon with respect to ships and gun-boats, I wrote to the head of one of the departments at Washington for information on the subject.

The following is the answer I received:—

"Calculating the cost of a 74 or 100 gun ship from the actual cost of the ship United States of 44 guns, built

---

* A nation having a navy is a temptation for an enemy to go to war with it. Thus, if America had had a navy, England would have been at war with her long ago, to attack or obtain that navy!—Ed.

Digitized by Google

at Philadelphia, between the years 1795 and 1798, which amounted to 300,000 dollars, it may be presumed, that a 74-gun ship would cost 500,000 dollars, and a 100 gun ship 700,000 dollars.

"Gun-boats calculated merely for the defence of harbours and rivers will, on an average, cost about 4000 dollars each, when fit to receive the crew and provisions."

On the data here given, I proceed to state comparative calculations respecting ships and gun-boats.

The ship United States cost 300,000 dollars. Gun-boats cost 4000 dollars each, consequently the 300,000 dollars expended on the ship, for the purpose of getting use of 44 guns, and those most heavy metal, would have built SEVENTY-FIVE gun-boats, each carrying a cannon of the same weight of metal that a ship of 100 guns can carry.

The difference therefore is, that the gun-boats give the use of thirty-one guns, heavy metal, more than can be obtained by the ship, and the expenses in both cases equal.

A 74-gun ship costs 500,000 dollars. The same money would build 125 gun-boats. The gain by gun-boats is the use of forty-one more guns, than can be obtained by expending the money on a ship of 74 guns.

The cost of an 100-gun ship is 700,000 dollars. This money would build 175 gun-boats; the gain therefore

Digitized by Google

by the boats is the use of seventy-five guns more than by the ship.

Though I had a general impression ever since I had the knowledge of gun-boats, that any given sum would go farther in building gun-boats than in building ships of war, and that gun-boats were preferable to ships for home defence, I did not suppose the difference was so great as the calculations above given prove them to be, for it is almost double in favour of the gun-boats. It is as 175 to 100. The cause of this difference is easily explained. The fact is, that all that part of the expence in building a ship from deck upwards, including masts, yards, sails, and rigging, is saved by building gun-boats, which are moved by oars, or a light sail occasionally.

The difference also, in point of repairs, between ships of war and gun-boats, is not only great, but it is greater in proportion than their first cost. The repairs of ships of war is annually from 1-14th to 1-10th of their first cost. The annual repairs of a ship that cost 300,000 dollars, will be above 21,000 dollars; the greatest part of this expense is in her sails and rigging, which gun-boats are free from.

The difference also in point of duration is great.

Gun-boats, when not in use, can be put under shelter, and preserved from the weather, but ships cannot; or boats can be sunk in the water or mud. This is the

Digitized by Google

way the nuts of cider mills for grinding apples are preserved. Were they to be exposed to the dry and hot air, after coming wet from the mill, they would crack, and split, and be good for nothing. But timber under water will continue sound for several hundred years, provided there be no worms.

Another advantage in favour of gun-boats, is the expedition with which a great number of them can be built at once. A hundred may be built as soon as one, if there are hands enough to set about them separately. They do not require preparations for building them that ships require, nor deep water to launch them in. They can be built on the shore of shallow waters; or they might be framed in the woods, or forests, and the parts brought separately down, and put together on the shore. But ships take up a long time in building.

The ship United States took up two whole years, 1796 and 1797, and part of the years 1795 and 1798, and all this for the purpose of getting the use of 44 guns, and those not heavy metal.

This foolish affair was not in the days of the present administration.

Ships and gun-boats are for different services. Ships are for distant expeditions; gun-boats for home defence. The one for the ocean, the other for the shore.

Gun-boats being moved by oars cannot be deprived of

Digitized by Google

motion by calms, for the calmer the weather the better for the boat. But a hostile ship becalmed in any of our waters, can be taken by gun boats moved by oars, let the rate of the ship be what it may. A 100-gun man of war becalmed is like a giant in a dead palsy; every little fellow can kick him.

The United States ought to have 500 gun-boats, stationed in different parts of the coast, each carrying a thirty-two or thirty-six pounder. Hostile ships would not then venture to lie within our waters, were it only for the certainty of being sometimes becalmed. They would then become prizes, and the insulting bullies on the ocean become prisoners in our own waters.

Having thus stated the comparative powers and expence of ships of war and gun-boats, I come to speak of fortifications.

Fortifications may be comprehended under two general heads.

First. Fortified towns; that is, towns enclosed within a fortified polygon, of which there are many on the continent of Europe, but not any in England.

Secondly. Simple forts and batteries. These are not formed on the regular principles of fortification, that is, they are not formed for the purpose of standing a siege as a fortified polygon is. They are for the pur-

Digitized by Google

pose of obstructing or annoying the progress of an enemy by land or water.

Batteries are formidable in defending narrow passes, by land, such as the passage of a bridge, or of a road cut through a rough and craggy mountain, that cannot be passed any where else. But they are not formidable in defending water passes, because a ship, with a brisk wind and tide running at the rate of ten miles an hour, will be out of the reach of the fire of the battery in fifteen or twenty minutes; and being a swift moving object all the time, it would be a mere chance that any shot struck her.

When the object of a ship is that of passing a battery, for the purpose of attaining or attacking some other object, it is not customary for the ship to fire at the battery, lest it should disturb her course. Three or four men are kept on deck to attend the helm, and the rest having nothing to do, go below.

Duckworth, in passing the Dardanelles up to Constantinople, did not fire at the batteries.

When batteries, for the defence of water-passes, can be erected without any great expence, and the men not exposed to capture, it may be very proper to have them. They may keep off small piratical vessels, but they are not to be trusted to for defence.

Fortifications give, in general, a DELUSIVE idea of

Digitized by Google

protection. All our principal losses in the revolutionary war were occasioned by trusting to fortifications.

Fort Washington with a garrison of 2500 men, was taken in less than four hours, and the men made prisoners of war. The same fate had befallen Fort Lee, on the opposite shore, if General Lee had not moved hastily off, and gained Hackinsack bridge. General Lincoln fortified Charleston, in South Carolina, and himself and his army were made prisoners of war.

General Washington began fortifying New York in 1776. General Howe passed up the East River, landed his army at Frog's Point, about twenty miles above the city, and marched down upon it; and had not General Washington stole silently and suddenly off on the North River side of York Island, himself and his army had also been prisoners.

Trust not to fortifications otherwise than as batteries, that can be abandoned at discretion.

The case however is, that batteries as a water defence against the passage of ships cannot do much. Were any given number of guns to be put in a battery for that purpose, and an equal number of the same weight of metal put in gun-boats for the same purpose, those in the boats would be more effectual than those in the battery.

The reason of this is obvious. A battery is sta-

Digitized by Google

tionary. Its fire is limited to about two miles, and there its power ceases. But every gun-boat moved by oars is a moveable fortification, that can follow up its fire, and change its place and position as circumstances may require; and besides this, gun-boats in calms are the SOVEREIGNS OF SHIPS.

As the matter interests the public, and most probably will come before congress at its next meeting; if the printers in any of the States, after publishing it in their newspapers, have a mind to publish it in a pamphlet form, together with my former piece on gun-boats, they have my consent freely.

I neither take COPY-RIGHT nor PROFIT from any thing I publish.

THOMAS PAINE.

TWO LETTERS FROM Mr. PAINE,

IN WHICH HE ALLUDES TO THE

CIRCUMSTANCE OF BEING SHOT AT.

New Rochelle, July 9, 1804.

Fellow Citizen,

As the weather is now getting hot in New York and the people begin to get out of town, you may as well come up here and help me to settle my accounts

Digitized by Google

with the man who lives on the place. You will be able to do this better than I shall, and in the mean time I can go on with my literary works, without having my mind taken off by affairs of a different kind. I have received a packet from Governor Clinton enclosing what I wrote for. If you come up by the stage you will stop at the post office, and they will direct you the way to the farm. It is only a pleasant walk. I send a piece for the Prospect; if the plan mentioned in it is pursued, it will open a way to enlarge and give establishment to the deistical church; but of this and some other things we will talk when you come up, and the sooner the better.

Your's in friendship,

THOMAS PAINE.

I have not received any newspapers nor any numbers of the Prospect since I have been here.

Bring my bag up with you.

New Rochelle, Jan. 16, 1805.

Esteemed Friend,

I have received two letters from you, one giving an account of your taking Thomas to Mr. Fowler, the other dated Jan. 12; I did not answer the first, because I hoped to see you the next Saturday or the Saturday after. What you heard of a gun being fired into the room is true; Robert and Rachel

Digitized by Google

were both gone out to keep christmas eve, and about eight o'clock at night the gun was fired; I run immediately out, one of Mr. Dean's boys with me, but the person that had done it was gone; I directly suspected who it was, and hallooed to him by name, that he was discovered. I did this that the party who fired might know I was on the watch. I cannot find any ball, but whatever the gun was charged with passed through about three or four inches below the window, making a hole large enough for a finger to go through; the muzzle must have been very near, as the place is black with the powder, and the glass of the window is shattered to pieces. Mr. Shule after examining the place, and getting what information could be had, issued a warrant to take up Derrick, and after examination committed him. He is now on bail (five hundred dollars) to take his trial at the supreme court in May next. Derrick owes me forty-eight dollars for which I have his note, and he was to work it out in making stone fence which he has not even begun, and besides this I have had to pay forty-two pounds eleven shillings for which I had passed my word for him at Mr. Pelton's store. Derrick borrowed the gun under pretence of giving Mrs. Bayeaux a christmas gun. He was with Purdy about two hours before the attack on the house was made, and he came from thence to Dean's half drunk, and brought with him a bottle of rum, and Purdy was with him when he was taken up.

I am exceedingly well in health, and shall always be

Digitized by Google

glad to see you. Hubbs tells me that your horse is getting better. Mr. Shule sent for the horse and took him when the first snow came, but he leaped the fences and came back. Hubbs says there is a bone broke. If this be the case I suppose he has broke or cracked it in leaping a fence when he was lame of the other hind leg, and hung with his hind legs in the fence. I am glad to hear what you tell me of Thomas. He shall not want for any thing that is necessary if he be a good boy, for he has no friend but me. You have not given me any account about the meeting house. Remember me to our friends.

Your's in friendship,

THOMAS PAINE.

TO FORGETFULNESS,

FROM

'The Castle in The Air,' to 'The Little Corner of the World.'

Memory, like a beauty that is always present to hear herself flattered, is flattered by every one. But the absent and silent goddess, Forgetfulness, has no votaries, and is never thought of; yet we owe her much. She is the goddess of ease, tho not of pleasure.

When the mind is like a room hung with black, and every corner of it crouded with the most horrid images

Digitized by Google

imagination can create, this kind, speechless goddess of a maid, Forgetfulness, is following us night and day with her opium wand, and gently touching first one, and then another, benumbs them into rest, and at last glides them away with the silence of a departing shadow. It is thus the tortured mind is restored to the calm condition of ease, and fitted for happiness.

How dismal must the picture of life appear to the mind in that dreadful moment, when it resolves on darkness, and to die! One can scarcely believe such a choice was possible. Yet how many of the young and beautiful, timid in every thing else, and formed for delight, have shut their eyes upon the world, and made the waters their sepulchral bed! Ah! would they in that crisis, when life and death are both before them, and each within their reach, would they but think, or try to think, that Forgetfulness will come to their relief, and lull them into ease, they could stay their hand, and lay hold of life. But there is a necromancy in wretchedness that entombs the mind, and increases the misery, by shutting out every ray of light and hope. It makes the wretched falsely believe they will be wretched ever. It is the most fatal of all dangerous delusions; and it is only when this necromantic night-mare of the mind begins to vanish, by being resisted, that it is discovered to be but a tyrannic spectre. All grief, like all things else, will yield to the obliterating power of time. While despair is preying on the mind, time and its effects are preying on despair; and certain it is, the dismal vision

Digitized by Google

will fade away, and Forgetfulness with her sister Ease, will change the scene. Then let not the wretched be rash, but wait, painful as the struggle may be, the arrival of Forgetfulness; for it will certainly arrive.

I have twice been present at the scene of attempted suicide. The one a love-distracted girl in England, the other of a patriotic friend in France; and as the circumstances of each are strongly pictured in my memory, I will relate them to you. They will in some measure corroborate what I have said of Forgetfulness.

About the year 1766, I was in Lincolnshire, in England, and on a visit at the house of a widow lady, Mrs. E——, at a small village in the fens of that county. It was in summer; and one evening after supper, Mrs. E—— and myself went to take a turn in the garden. It was about eleven o'clock, and to avoid the night air of the fens, we were walking in a bower, shaded over with hazel-bushes. On a sudden, she screamed out, and cried "Lord! look look!" I cast my eyes through the openings of the hazel-bushes, in the direction she was looking, and saw a white shapeless figure, without head or arms, moving along one of the walks at some distance from us. I quitted Mrs. E——, and went after it. When I got into the walk where the figure was, and was following it, it took up another walk. There was a holly bush in the corner of the two walks, which, it being night, I did not observe; and as I continued to step forward, the holly-bush came in a straight

Digitized by Google

line between me and the figure, and I lost sight of it; and as I passed along one walk, and the figure the other, the holly bush still continued to intercept the view, so as to give the appearance that the figure had vanished. When I came to the corner of the two walks, I caught sight of it again, and coming up with it, I reached out my hand to touch it; and in the act of doing this the idea struck me, Will my hand pass through the air, or shall I feel any thing? Less than a moment would decide this, and my hand rested on the shoulder of a human figure. I spoke, but do not recollect what I said. It answered in a low voice, "Pray let me alone." I then knew who it was. It was a young lady who was on a visit to Mrs. E——, and who, when we sat down to supper, said she found herself extremely ill, and would go to bed. I called to Mrs. E——, who came, and I said to her, "It is Miss N——." Mrs. E—— said, "My God! I hope you are not going to do yourself any hurt;" for Mrs. E—— suspected something. She replied with pathetic melancholy, "Life has not one pleasure for me." We got her into the house, and Mrs. E—— took her to sleep with her.

The case was, the man whom she expected to be married to, had forsaken her, and when she heard he was to be married to another, the shock appeared to her to be too great to be borne. She had retired, as I have said, to her room, and when she supposed all the family were gone to bed, (which would have been the case, if Mrs. E—— and I had not walked into the garden) she undressed herself, and

Digitized by Google

tied her apron over her head; which descending below her waist gave her the shapeless figure I have spoken of.

Aided by the obscurity of almost midnight, and with this and a white under petticoat and slippers, for she had taken out her buckles, and put them at the servant maid's door, I suppose as a keepsake, she came down stairs, and was going to drown herself in a pond at the bottom of the garden, towards which she was going when Mrs. E—— screamed out. We found afterwards, that she had heard the scream, and that was the cause of her changing her walk.

By gentle usage, and leading her into subjects that might, without doing violence to her feelings, and without letting her see the direct intention of it, steal her as it were from the horror she was in, (and I felt a compassionate, earnest disposition to do it, for she was a good girl) she recovered her former cheerfulness, and was afterwards the happy wife, and the mother of a family.

The other case, and the conclusion in my next.

In Paris, in 1793, I had lodgings in the Rue Fauxbourg, St. Denis, No. 63. They were the most agreeable for situation of any I ever had in Paris, except that they were too remote from the convention, of which I was then a member. But this was recompenced by their being also remote from the alarms and confusion

Digitized by Google

into which the interior of Paris was then often thrown. The news of those things used to arrive to us, as if we were in a state of tranquillity in the country. The house, which was enclosed by a wall and gateway from the street, was a good deal like an old mansion farm-house, and the court-yard was like a farm-yard stocked with fowls, ducks, turkies, and geese; which for amusement we used to feed out of the parlour window on the ground floor. There were some hutches for rabbits and a sty with two pigs. Beyond, was a garden of more than an acre of ground, well laid out, and stocked with excellent fruit trees. The orange, apricot, and green-gage plumb, were the best I ever tasted; and it is the only place where I saw the wild cucumber. The place had formerly been occupied by some curious person.

My apartments consisted of three rooms; the first, for wood, water, &c. with an old fashioned closet chest, high enough to hang up clothes in; the next was the bed room; and beyond it the sitting room, which looked into the garden thro a glass door; and on the outside there was a small landing place railed in, and a flight of narrow stairs almost hidden by the vines that grew over it, by which I could descend into the garden, without going down stairs thro the house. I am trying by description to make you see the place in your mind, because it will assist the story I have to tell; and which I think you can do, because you once called upon me there on account of Sir ———, who was then, as I was soon afterwards, in arrestation. But

Digitized by Google

it was winter when you came, and it is a summer scene I am describing.

* * * *

I went into my chamber to write and sign a certificate for them,* which I intended to take to the guard house to obtain their release. Just as I had finished it a man came into my room dressed in the Parisian uniform of a captain, and spoke to me in good English, and with a good address. He told me that two young men, Englishmen, were arrested and detained in the guard-house, and that the section, (meaning those who represented and acted for the section) had sent him to ask me if I knew them, in which case they would be liberated. This matter being soon settled between us, he talked to me about the revolution, and something about the 'Rights of Man' which he had read in English; and at parting offered me in a polite and civil manner his services. And who do you think the man was that offered me his services? It was no other than the public executioner Samson, who guillotined the king and all who were guillotined in Paris; and who lived in the same section and in the same street with me.

* * * *

As to myself, I used to find some relief by walking alone in the garden after dark, and cursing with hearty good-will the authors of that terrible system that had

---

* Mr. Paine here alludes to two friends who were under arrest. Ed.

Digitized by Google

turned the character of the revolution I had been proud to defend.

I went but little to the convention, and then only to make my appearance; because I found it impossible to join in their tremendous decrees, and useless and dangerous to oppose them. My having voted and spoken extensively, more so than any other member, against the execution of the king, had already fixed a mark upon me: neither dared any of my associates in the convention to translate and speak in French for me any thing I might have dared to have written.

* * * *

Pen and ink were then of no use to me: no good could be done by writing, and no printer dared to print; and whatever I might have written for my private amusement, as anecdotes of the times, would have been continually exposed to be examined, and tortured into any meaning that the rage of party might fix upon it; and as to softer subjects, my heart was in distress at the fate of my friends, and my harp was hung upon the weeping willows.

As it was summer we spent most of our time in the garden and passed it away in those childish amusements that serve to keep reflection from the mind, such as marbles, scotch-hops, battledores, &c. at which we were all pretty expert.

Digitized by Google

In this retired manner we remained about six or seven weeks, and our landlord went every evening into the city to bring us the news of the day and the evening journal.

I have now, my 'Little Corner of the World,' led you on, step by step, to the scene that makes the sequel of this narrative, and I will put that scene before your eyes. You shall see it in description as I saw it in fact.*

* * * *

He recovered, and being anxious to get out of France, a passport was obtained for him and Mr. Choppin: they received it late in the evening, and set off next morning for Basle before four, from which place I had a letter from them, highly pleased with their escape from France, into which they had entered with an enthusiasm of patriotic devotion. Ah France! thou hast ruined the character of a revolution virtuously begun, and destroyed those who produced it. I might almost say like Job's servant, 'and I only am escaped.'

Two days after they were gone I heard a rapping at the gate, and looking out of the window of the bed-room I saw the landlord going with the candle to the

---

* The second instance of attempted suicide is omitted from motives of personal delicacy. Mr. Paine's letter is continued, as it contains an account of his mode of life before he was sent to prison, &c.—Ed.

Digitized by Google

gate, which he opened, and a guard with musquets and fixed bayonets entered. I went to bed again, and made up my mind for prison, for I was then the only lodger. It was a guard to take up ————————, but I thank God they were out of their reach.

The guard came about a month after, in the night, and took away the landlord, Georgeit; and the scene in the house finished with the arrestation of myself. This was soon after you called on me, and sorry I was it was not in my power to render to ——— the service that you asked.

I have now fulfilled my engagement, and I hope your expectation, in relating the case of ———, landed back on the shore of life, by the mistake of the pilot, who was conducting him out; and preserved afterwards from prison, perhaps a worse fate, without knowing it himself.

You say a story cannot be too melancholy for you. This is interesting and affecting, but not melancholy. It may raise in your mind a sympathetic sentiment in reading it; and though it may start a tear of pity, you will not have a tear of sorrow to drop on the page.

* * * *

Here, my contemplative correspondent, let us stop

Digitized by Google

and look back upon the scene. The matters here related being all facts, are strongly pictured in my mind, and in this sense, Forgetfulness does not apply. But facts and feelings are distinct things, and it is against feelings that the opium wand of Forgetfulness draws us into ease. Look back on any scene or subject that once gave you distress, for all of us have felt some, and you will find, that though the remembrance of the fact is not extinct in your memory, the feeling is extinct in your mind. You can remember when you had felt distress, but you cannot feel that distress again, and perhaps will wonder you felt it then. It is like a shadow that loses itself by light.

It is often difficult to know what is a misfortune: that which we feel as a great one to day, may be the means of turning aside our steps into some new path that leads to happiness yet unknown. In tracing the scenes of my own life, I can discover that the condition I now enjoy, which is sweet to me, and will be more so when I get to America, except by the loss of your society, has been produced, in the first instance, in my being disappointed in former projects. Under that impenetrable veil futurity we know not what is concealed, and the day to arrive is hidden from us. Turning then our thoughts to those cases of despair that lead to suicide, when, 'the mind' as you say 'neither sees nor hears, and holds council only with itself; when the very idea of consolation would add to the torture, and self-destruction

Digitized by Google

is its only aim,' what, it may be asked, is the best advice, what the best relief? I answer, seek it not in reason, for the mind is at war with reason, and to reason against feelings is as vain as to reason against fire: it serves only to torture the torture, by adding reproach to horror. All reasoning with ourselves in such cases acts upon us like the reason of another person, which however kindly done, serves but to insult the misery we suffer. If reason could remove the pain, reason would have prevented it. If she could not do the one, how is she to perform the other? In all such cases we must look upon reason as dispossessed of her empire, by a revolt of the mind. She retires herself to a distance to weep, and the ebony sceptre of despair rules alone. All that reason can do is to suggest, to hint a thought, to signify a wish, to cast now and then a kind of bewailing look, to hold up, when she can catch the eye, the miniature shaded portrait of Hope; and tho dethroned, and can dictate no more, to wait upon us in the humble station of a hand-maid.

A Letter from Mr. Paine to a Gentleman at Washington.

New Rochelle, March 20, 1806.

I will inform you of what I know respecting General Miranda, with whom I first became acquainted at

Digitized by Google

New York about the year 1783. He is a man of talents and enterprize, a Mexican by birth, and the whole of his life has been a life of adventures.

I went to Europe from New York in April 1787. Mr. Jefferson was then minister from America to France, and Mr. Littlepage a Virginian (whom John Jay knows) was agent for the king of Poland, at Paris.

Mr. Littlepage was a young man of extraordinary talents, and I first met with him at Mr. Jefferson's house at dinner. By his intimacy with the king of Poland, to whom also he was chamberlain, he became well acquainted with the plans and projects of the northern powers of Europe. He told me of Miranda's getting himself introduced to the Empress Catharine of Russia, and obtaining a sum of money from her, four thousand pounds sterling; but it did not appear to me what the project was for which the money was given: it appeared as a kind of retaining fee.

After I had published the first part of the 'Rights of Man' in England, in the year 1791, I met Miranda at the house of Turnbull and Forbes, merchants, Devonshire square, London. He had been a little time before this in the employ of Mr. Pitt, with respect to Nootka Sound, but I did not at that time know it; and I will, in the course of this letter, inform you how this connection between Pitt and Miranda ended; for I know it of my own knowledge.

Digitized by Google

I published the second part of the 'Rights of Man' in London in February 1792, and I continued in London till I was elected a member of the French convention, in September of that year; and went from London to Paris to take my seat in the convention, which was to meet the 20th of that month: I arrived at Paris on the 19th.

After the convention met Miranda came to Paris, and was appointed general of the French army, under General Dumourier; but as the affairs of that army went wrong in the beginning of the year 1792, Miranda was suspected, and was brought under arrest to Paris to take his trial.

He summoned me to appear to his character, and also a Mr. Thomas Christie, connected with the house of Turnbull and Forbes.

I gave my testimony as I believed, which was, that his leading object was, and had been, the emancipation of his country, Mexico, from the bondage of Spain; for I did not at that time know of his engagements with Pitt. Mr. Christie's evidence went to shew that Miranda did not come to France as a necessitous adventurer; that he came from public spirited motives, and that he had a large sum of money in the hands of Turnbull and Forbes. The house of Turnbull and Forbes was then in a contract to supply Paris with flour. Miranda was acquitted.

A few days after his acquittal he came to see me, and

Digitized by Google

a few days afterwards I returned the visit. He seemed desirous of satisfying me that he was independent, and that he had money in the hands of Turnbull and Forbes. He did not tell me of his affair with old Catharine of Russia, nor did I tell him that I knew of it.

But he entered into conversation with respect to Nootka Sound, and put into my hands several letters of Mr. Pitt's to him on that subject; amongst which was one that I believe he gave me by mistake, for when I had opened it and was beginning to read it, he put forth his hand and said, 'O that is not the letter I intended;' but as the letter was short I soon got through it, and then returned it to him without making any remarks upon it.

The dispute with Spain about Nootka Sound was then compromised; and Pitt compromised with Miranda for his services by giving him twelve hundred pounds sterling, for this was the contents of the letter.

Now if it be true that Miranda brought with him a credit upon certain persons in New York for sixty thousand pounds sterling, it is not difficult to suppose from what quarter the credit came; for the opening of any proposals between Pitt and Miranda was already made by the affair of Nootka Sound.

Miranda was in Paris when Mr. Monroe arrived there as minister; and as Miranda wanted to get acquainted with him, I cautioned Mr. Monroe against him, and told

Digitized by Google

him of the affair of Nootka Sound, and the twelve hundred pounds.

You are at liberty to make what use you please of this letter, and with my name to it.

THOMAS PAINE.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS,

&c.

Note.—Mr. Carlile has just published a little pamphlet of Mr. Paine's poetry, the whole of which, with a few others added in this collection, have been in my possession many years. I have omitted one very witty piece that Mr. Carlile has printed, 'A Commentary on the Eastern Wise Men,' it ranging not with my plan; also the 'British Constitution,' not knowing it to be Mr. Paine's.

SONG.

Tune.—Rule Britannia.

Hail great REPUBLIC of the world,
Which rear'd, which rear'd, her empire in the west,
Where fam'd COLUMBUS', COLUMBUS' flag unfurl'd,
Gave tortured EUROPE scenes of rest;

Digitized by Google

Be thou for ever, for ever, great and free,
The land of LOVE, and LIBERTY!

Beneath thy spreading, mantling vine,
Beside, beside each flowery grove, and spring,
And where thy lofty, thy lofty mountains shine,
May all thy sons, and fair ones sing,
Be thou for ever, for ever, great and free,
The land of LOVE, and LIBERTY!

From thee, may hellish DISCORD prowl,
With all, with all her dark, and hateful train;
And whilst thy mighty, thy mighty waters roll,
May heaven descended CONCORD reign.
Be thou for ever, for ever, great and free,
The land of LOVE, and LIBERTY!

Where'er the ATLANTIC surges lave,
Or sea, or sea, the human eye delights,
There may thy starry, thy starry standard wave,
The CONSTELLATION OF THY RIGHTS!
Be thou for ever, for ever, great and free,
The land of LOVE, and LIBERTY!

May ages as they rise proclaim,
The glories, the glories of thy natal day;
And states from thy, from thy exalted name,
Learn how to rule, and to obey.
Be thou for ever, for ever great and free,
The land of LOVE, and LIBERTY!

Digitized by Google

Let Laureats make their BIRTH-DAYS known,
Or how, or how, war's thunderbolts are hurl'd;
Tis ours the charter, the charter, ours alone,
To sing the BIRTH-DAY of a world!
Be thou for ever, for ever, great and free,
The land of LOVE and LIBERTY!

THE BOSTON PATRIOTIC SONG.

Tune.—Anacreon in Heaven.

Ye Sons of COLUMBIA who bravely have fought,
For those rights which unstain'd from your sires have descended,
May you long taste the blessings your valour has bought,
And your sons reap the soil which their fathers defended;
Mid the reign of mild peace,
May your nation increase,
With the glory of ROME, and the wisdom of GREECE.

CHORUS.

And ne'er may the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

In a clime whose rich vales feed the marts of the world,
Whose shores are unshaken by Europe's commotion;
The trident of commerce should never be hurl'd,
To increase the legitimate power of the ocean;
But should pirates invade,
Though in thunder array'd,
Let your cannon declare the free charter of trade.

Digitized by Google

CHORUS.

For ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

The fame of our arms, of our laws the mild sway,
Had justly ennobled our nation in story,
Till the dark clouds of fiction obscured our bright day,
And envellop'd the sun of AMERICAN glory;
But let traitors be told,
Who their country have sold,
And barter'd their God, for his image in gold,

CHORUS.

That ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

While FRANCE her huge limbs bathes recumbent in blood,
And society's base threats with wide dissolution;
May Peace like the dove, who return'd from the flood,
Find an Ark of abode in our mild Constitution;
But tho peace is our aim,
Yet the boon we disclaim,
If bought by our Sovereignty, Justice, or Fame.

CHORUS.

For ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

'Tis the fire of the flint each American warms,
Let Rome's haughty victors beware of collision!
Let them bring all the vassals of EUROPE in arms,
We're a World by ourselves, and disdain a division;

Digitized by Google

While with patriot pride,
To our laws we're allied,
No foe can subdue us, no faction divide;

CHORUS.

For ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Our mountains are crown'd with imperial oak,
Whose roots like our Liberty ages have nourish'd,
But long e'er the nation submits to the yoke,
Not a tree shall be left on the soil where it flourish'd.
Should invasion impend,
Every grove would descend,
From the hill tops they shaded, our shores to defend.

CHORUS.

For ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Let our patriots destroy vile anarchy's worm,
Lest our liberty's growth should be check'd by corrosion,
Then let clouds thicken round us, we heed not the storm,
Our earth fears no shock, but the earth's own explosion.
Foes assail us in vain,
Tho their fleets bridge the main,
For our altars, and claims, with our lives we'll maintain.

CHORUS.

For ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Digitized by Google

Should the tempest of war overshadow our land,
Its bolts can ne'er rend FREEDOM'S temple asunder;
For unmoved at its portal would WASHINGTON stand,
And repulse with his breast the assaults of the thunder,
His sword from its sleep,
In its scabbard would leap,
And conduct with its point every flash to the deep.

CHORUS.

For ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Let FAME to the world, sound AMERICA'S voice,
No intrigue can her sons from their government sever;
Its wise regulations, and laws are their choice,
And shall flourish till LIBERTY, slumber for ever.
Then unite heart and hand,
Like Leonidas' band;
And swear by the GOD of the ocean, and land;

CHORUS.

That ne'er shall the sons of COLUMBIA be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

SONG.

Tune—Anacreon in Heaven.

To COLUMBIA, who gladly reclined at her ease,
On ATLANTIC'S broad bosom, lie smiling in peace,

Digitized by Google

MINERVA flew hastily, sent from above,
And addrest her this message from thundering JOVE:
Rouse, quickly awake,
Your FREEDOM's at stake,
Storms arise, your renown'd INDEPENDENCE to shake,
Then lose not a moment, my aid I will lend,
If your sons will assemble your RIGHTS to defend.

Roused COLUMBIA rose up, and indignant declared,
That no nation she had wrong'd, and no nation she fear'd,
That she wished not for war, but if war were her fate,
She would rally up souls independent and great.
Then tell mighty JOVE,
That we quickly will prove,
We deserve the protection he'll send from above;
For ne'er shall the sons of AMERICA bend,
But united their RIGHTS and their FREEDOM defend.

MINERVA smiled cheerfully as she withdrew,
Enraptured to find her AMERICANS true,
"For, said she, our sly MERCURY oft times reports,
That your sons are divided"—COLUMBIA retorts,
"Tell that vile god of thieves,
His report but deceives,
And we care not what madman such nonsense believes,
For ne'er shall the sons of AMERICA bend,
But united their RIGHTS and their FREEDOM defend."

JOVE rejoiced in COLUMBIA such union to see,
And swore by old Styx she deserved to be free;

Digitized by Google

Then assembled the GODS, who all gave consent,
Their assistance if needful her ill to prevent;
MARS arose, shook his armour,
And swore his old Farmer
Should ne'er in his country see ought that could harm her,
For ne'er should the sons of AMERICA bend,
But united their RIGHTS and their FREEDOM defend.

MINERVA resolved that her Ægis she'd lend,
And APOLLO declared he their cause would defend,
Old VULCAN an armour would forge for their aid,
More firm than the one for ACHILLES he made.
JOVE vow'd he'd prepare,
A compound most rare,
Of courage, and union, a bountiful share;
And swore ne'er shall the sons of AMERICA bend,
But their RIGHTS and their FREEDOM most firmly defend.

Ye sons of COLUMBIA then join hand in hand,
Divided we fall, but united we stand;
Tis ours to determine, tis ours to decree,
That in peace we will live INDEPENDENT and FREE;
And should from afar
Break the horrors of war,
We'll always be ready at once to declare,
That ne'er will the sons of AMERICA bend,
But united their RIGHTS and their FREEDOM defend.

Digitized by Google

The following story, ridiculous as it is, is a fact. A farmer at New Shoreham, near Brighthelmstone, having voted at an election for a member of parliament contrary to the pleasure of three neighbouring justices, they took revenge on his dog, which they caused to be hanged, for starting a hare upon the high road.

FARMER SHORT'S DOG, PORTER,

A TALE.

THREE justices (so says my tale)
Once met upon the public weal.
For learning, law, and parts profound,
Their fame was spread the county round;
Each by his wondrous art could tell
Of things as strange, as Sydrophel;
Or by the help of sturdy ale,
So cleverly could tell a tale,
That half the gaping standers by
Would laugh aloud; the rest would cry.
Or by the help of nobler wine,
Would knotty points so nice define,
That in an instant right was wrong,
Yet did not hold that station long,
For while they talk'd of wrong and right,
The question vanisht out of sight.
Each knew by practice where to turn
To every powerful page in BURN,
And could by help of note and book
Talk law like LITTLETON and COKE.

Digitized by Google

Each knew by instinct when and where
A farmer caught or kill'd a hare;
Could tell if any man had got
One hundred pounds per ann. or not;
Or what was greater, could divine
If it was only ninety-nine.
For when the hundred wanted one,
They took away the owner's gun.

Knew by the leering of an eye
If girls had lost their chastity,
And if they had not—would divine
Some way to make their virtue shine.

These learned brothers being assembled
(At which the country fear'd and trembled),
A warrant sent to bring before 'em,
One Farmer Short, who dwelt at Shoreham,
Upon a great and heavy charge,
Which we shall here relate at large,
That those who were not there may read,
In after days the mighty deed:

Viz.

" That he," the 'foresaid " Farmer Short,
" Being by the devil moved, had not
" One hundred pounds per annum got;
" That having not (in form likewise)
" The fear of God before his eyes,

Digitized by Google

" By force and arms did keep and cherish,
" Within the aforesaid town and parish,
" Against the statute so provided,
" A dog. And there the dog abided.
" That he, this dog, did then and there,
" Pursue and take and kill a hare;
" Which treason was, or some such thing,
" Against our SOVEREIGN LORD THE KING."

The constable was bid to jog,
And bring the farmer—not the dog.

But fortune, whose perpetual wheel
Grinds disappointment sharp as steel,
On purpose to attack the pride
Of those who over others ride,
So nicely brought the matter round,
That Farmer Short could not be found,
Which plunged the bench in so much doubt
They knew not what to go about.

But after pondering, pro and con,
And mighty reasonings thereupon,
They found on opening of the laws,
That he, the dog aforesaid, was
By being privy to the fact,
Within the meaning of the act,
And since the master had withdrawn,
And was the Lord knows whither gone,
They judged it right, and good in law,
That he, the dog, should answer for

Digitized by Google

Such crimes as they by proof could show
Were acted by himself and Co.
The constable again was sent,
To bring the dog; or dread the event.

Poor Porter, right before the door,
Was guarding of his master's store;
And as the constable approach'd him,
He caught him by the leg and broach'd him;
Poor Porter thought (if dogs can think)
He came to steal his master's chink.

The man, by virtue of his staff,
Bid people help; not stand and laugh;
On which a mighty rout began;
Some blamed the dog, and some the man.
Some said he had no business there,
Some said he had business every where.
At length the constable prevail'd,
And those who would not help were jail'd;
And taking Porter by the collar,
Commanded all the guards to follow.

The justices received the felon,
With greater form than I can tell on,
And quitting now their wine and punch,
Began upon him, all at once.

At length a curious quibble rose,
How far the law could interpose,

Digitized by Google

For it was proved, and rightly too,
That he, the dog, did not pursue
The hare, with any ill intent,
But only follow'd by the scent;
And she, the hare, by running hard,
Thro hedge and ditch, without regard,
Plunged in a pond, and there was drown'd,
And by a neighboring justice found;
Wherefore, though he the hare annoy'd,
It can't be said that he destroy'd;
It even can't be proved he beat her,
And "to destroy," must mean, "to eat her."
Did you e'er see a gamester struck,
With all the symptoms of ill luck?
Or mark the visage which appears,
When even HOPE herself despairs?
So look'd the bench, and every brother,
Sad pictures drew of one another;
Till one more learned than the rest,
Rose up, and thus the court addressed.
"Why, gentlemen, I'll tell ye how,
"Ye may clear up this matter now,
"For I am of opinion strong
"The dog deserves, and should be hung.
"I'll prove it by as plain a case,
"As is the nose upon your face.

"Now if, suppose, a man, or so,
"Should be obliged, or not to go,

Digitized by Google

" About, or not about a case,
" To this, or that, or t'other place;
" And if another man, for fun,
" Should fire a pistol (viz.) a gun,
" And he, the first, by knowing not
" That he, the second man had shot,
" Should undesign'dly meet the bullet,
" Against the throat (in Greek) the gullet,
" And get such mischief by the hit
" As should unsense him of his wit,
" And if that after that he died,
" D'ye think the other mayn't be tried?
" Most sure he must, and hang'd, because
" He fired his gun against the laws:
" For 'tis a case most clear and plain,
" Had A. not shot, B. had not been slain:
" So had the dog not chased the hare,
" She never had been drown'd—that's clear.

This logic, rhetoric, and wit,
So nicely did the matter hit,
That PORTER—tho unheard, was cast,
And in a halter breathed his last.
The justices adjourned to dine,
And whet their logic up with wine.

Digitized by Google

SONG,

ON THE DEATH OF GENERAL WOLFE.

In a mouldering cave where the wretched retreat,
  Britannia sat wasted with care;
She mourn'd for her Wolfe, and exclaim'd against fate,
  And gave herself up to despair.
The walls of her cell she had sculptured around
  With the feats of her favorite son;
And even the dust, as it lay on the ground,
  Was engraved with the deeds he had done.

The sire of the Gods from his crystalline throne
  Beheld the disconsolate dame,
And moved with her tears he sent Mercury down,
  And these were the tidings that came.
Britannia forbear, not a sigh nor a tear
  For thy Wolfe so deservedly loved,
Your tears shall be changed into triumphs of joy,
  For thy Wolfe is not dead but removed.

The sons of the East, the proud giants of old,
  Have crept from their darksome abodes,
And this is the news as in Heaven it was told,
  They were marching to war with the Gods;
A council was held in the chambers of Jove,
  And this was their final decree,
That Wolfe should be called to the armies above,
  And the charge was entrusted to me.

Digitized by Google

To the plains of QUEBEC with the orders I flew,
He begg'd for a moment's delay;
He cry'd, Oh! forbear, let me victory hear,
And then thy command I'll obey.
With a darksome thick film I encompass'd his eyes,
And bore him away in an urn,
Lest the fondness he bore to his own native shore,
Should induce him again to return.

This Song was written immediately after the Death of General Wolfe. At this time a prize was offered for the best Epitaph on that celebrated hero. Of these Epitaphs I have a manuscript collection of eighteen. Mr. Paine entered the list among other competitors, but his matter growing too long for an Epitaph, and assuming another shape, he entitled it an Ode; and it was so published in the Gentleman's Magazine. It was soon after set to music, became a popular song, and was sung at the Anacreontic and other societies.—ED.

THE SNOW-DROP AND CRITIC,
A DIALOGUE.

To the Editor of the Pennsylvanian Magazine, 1775.

Sir,

I have given your very modest "Snow Drop"* what I think Shakspeare calls—"a local habitation and a name;" that is, I have made a poet of him, and have sent him to take possession of a page in your next magazine: here he

* Introduction or Preface to No. 1.—See p. 3. Miscellaneous Letters and Essays, Political Works, Vol. II.

Digitized by Google

comes disputing with a critic, about the propriety of a prologue.

Enter CRITIC and SNOW DROP.

CRITIC.

Prologues to magazines!—the man is mad,
No magazine, a prologue ever had;
But let us hear, what new, and mighty things,
Your wonder working magic fancy brings.

SNOW-DROP.

Bit by the muse in an unlucky hour,
I've left myself at home, and turn'd a flower
And thus disguised came forth to tell my tale,
A plain white SNOW DROP gather'd from the vale;
I come to sing that summer is at hand,
The summer time of wit you'll understand;
And that this garden of our magazine,
Will soon exhibit such a pleasing scene,
That even critics shall admire the show,
If their good grace will give us time to grow:
Beneath the surface of the parent earth,
We've various seeds just struggling into birth;
Plants, fruits, and flowers, and all the smiling race,
That can the orchard, or the garden grace;
Our numbers Sir, so vast and endless are,
That when in full complexion we appear;
Each eye, each hand, shall pluck what suits its taste,
And every palate shall enjoy a feast;
The ROSE, and LILY, shall address the fair,
And whisper sweetly out, "My dears, take care;"

Digitized by Google

With sterling worth the PLANT OF SENSE shall rise,
And teach the curious to philosophize;
The keen-eyed wit shall claim the SCENTED BRIAR,
And sober cits the SOLID GRAIN admire;
While generous juices sparkling from the VINE,
Shall warm the audience till they cry—divine!
And when the scenes of one gay month are o'er,
Shall clap their hands, and shout—encore! encore!

CRITIC.

All this is mighty fine! but prithee when,
The frost returns, how fight ye then your men?

SNOW-DROP.

I'll tell you, sir! we'll garnish out the scenes,
With stately rows of hardy EVERGREENS,
Trees that will bear the frost and deck their tops
With everlasting flowers, like diamond drops,
We'll draw, and paint, and carve, with so much skill,
That wondering wits shall cry, diviner still!

CRITIC.

Better, and better, yet! but now suppose,
Some critic wight in mighty verse, or prose,
Should draw his gray goose weapon, dipt in gall,
And mow ye down PLANTS, FLOWERS, TREES, and ALL.

SNOW-DROP.

Why then, we'll die like FLOWERS OF SWEET PERFUME,
And yield a fragrance, even in the TOMB!

Digitized by Google

IMPROMPTU
ON
BACHELORS' HALL,
At Philadelphia, being destroyed by Lightning, 1775.

Fair VENUS so often was mist from the skies,
And BACCHUS as frequently absent likewise,
That the synod began to enquire out the reason,
Suspecting the culprits were plotting of treason.
At length it was found they had open'd a ball
At a place by the mortals call'd BACHELORS' HALL;
Where VENUS disclosed every fun she could think of,
And BACCHUS made nectar for mortals to drink of.
JOVE highly displeas'd at such riotous doings,
Sent TIME to reduce the whole building to ruins;
But TIME was so slack with his traces and dashes,
That JOVE in a passion consumed it to ashes.

LIBERTY TREE,
A Song, written early in the American Revolution.

Tune—"Gods of the Greeks."

In a chariot of light, from the regions of day,
The GODDESS of LIBERTY came,
Ten thousand celestials directed her way,
And hither conducted the dame.

Digitized by Google

A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
And the plant she named LIBERTY TREE.

The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourish'd and bore:
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around,
To seek out this peaceable shore.
Unmindful of names or distinctions they came,
For freemen like brothers agree;.
With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was LIBERTY TREE.

Beneath this fair tree, like the patriarchs of old,
Their bread in contentment they ate,
Unvexed with the troubles of silver or gold,
The cares of the grand and the great.
With timber and tar they Old England supplied,
And supported her power on the sea:
Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
For the honour of LIBERTY TREE.

But hear, O ye swains (tis a tale most profane),
How all the tyrannical powers,
King, commons, and lords, are uniting amain,
To cut down this guardian of ours.
From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms,
Thro the land let the sound of it flee:
Let the far and the near all unite with a cheer,
In defence of our LIBERTY TREE.

Digitized by Google

VERSES TO A FRIEND,

AFTER A LONG CONVERSATION ON WAR.

THE rain pours down, the city looks forlorn,
And gloomy subjects suit the howling morn;
Close by my fire, with door and window fast,
And safely shelter'd from the driving blast,
To gayer thoughts I bid a day's adieu,
To spend a scene of solitude with you.

So oft has black revenge engross'd the care
Of all the leisure hours man finds to spare;
So oft has guilt in all her thousand dens,
Call'd for the vengeance of chastising pens;
That while I fain would ease my heart on you,
No thought is left untold, no passion new.

From flight to flight the mental path appears,
Worn with the steps of near six thousand years,
And fill'd throughout with every scene of pain,
From modern murderers down to murderous Cain.
Alike in cruelty, alike in hate,
In guilt alike, but more alike in fate,
Cursed supremely for the blood they drew,
Each from the rising world, while each was new.

Digitized by Google

Go, men of blood! true likeness of the first,
And strew your blasted heads with homely dust:
In ashes sit—in wretched sackcloth weep,
And with unpitied sorrows cease to sleep.
Go haunt the tombs, and single out the place
Where earth itself shall suffer a disgrace.
Go spell the letters on some mouldering urn,
And ask if he who sleeps there can return.
Go count the numbers that in silence lie,
And learn by study what it is to die;
For sure your heart, if any heart you own,
Conceits that man expires without a groan;
That he who lives receives from you a grace,
Or death is nothing but a change of place:
That peace is dull, that joy from sorrow springs,
And war the most desirable of things.
Else why these scenes that wound the feeling mind,
This sport of death—this cockpit of mankind!
Why sobs the widow in perpetual pain?
Why cries the orphan,—"Oh! my father's slain!"
Why hangs the sire his paralytic head,
And nods with manly grief—"My son is dead!"
Why drops the tear from off the sister's cheek,
And sweetly tells the misery she would speak?
Or why, in sorrow sunk, does pensive John
To all the neighbours tell, "Poor master's gone?"

Oh! could I paint the passion that I feel,
Or point a horror that would wound like steel,

Digitized by Google

To each unfeeling, unrelenting mind,
I'd send destruction and relieve mankind.
You that are husbands, fathers, brothers, all
The tender names which kindred learn to call;
Yet like an image carved in massy stone,
You bear the shape, but sentiment have none;
Allied by dust and figure, not with mind,
You only herd, but live not with mankind.

Since then no hopes to civilize remain,
And mild philosophy has preach'd in vain,
One prayer is left which dreads no proud reply,
That he who made you breathe will make you die.

LINES

SENT TO SIR ROBERT SMITH,

The morning after asking Mr. Paine over night the question

WHAT IS LOVE?

Paris, 1800.

'Tis that delightful transport we can feel,
Which painters cannot paint, nor words reveal,
Nor any art we know of,—can conceal.
Canst thou describe the sun-beams to the blind,
Or make him feel a shadow with his mind?

Digitized by Google

So neither can we by description show
This first of all felicities below.

When happy LOVE pours magic o'er the soul,
And all our thoughts in sweet delirium roll;
When CONTEMPLATION spreads her rainbow wings,
And every flutter some new rapture brings:
How sweetly then our moments glide away,
And dreams repeat the raptures of the day;
We live in ecstacy to all things kind,
For LOVE can teach a moral to the mind.
But are there not some other marks that prove,
What is this wonder of the soul, call'd LOVE?

O yes, there are, but of a different kind,
The dreadful horrors of a dismal mind.
Some jealous fury throws her poison'd dart
And rends in pieces the distracted heart.

When LOVE'S a tyrant, and the soul a slave,
No hopes remain to thought, but in the grave;
In that dark den, it sees an end to grief,
And what was once its dread, becomes relief.

What are the iron chains that hands have wrought?
The hardest chains to break, are those of thought.
Think well of this, ye lovers, and be kind,
Nor play with torture—or a tortured mind.

Digitized by Google

IMPROMPTU

ON

A LONG NOSED FRIEND.*

Paris, 1800.

GOING along the other day,
Upon a certain plan;
I met a nose upon the way,
Behind it—was a man.

I called unto the nose to stop,
And when it had done so,—
The man behind it—he came up,
They made ZENOBIO.

THE STRANGE STORY OF

KORAH, DATHAN, AND ABIRAM,

Numbers, Chap. xvi. accounted for.

OLD ballads sing of Chevy-chace,
Beneath whose rueful shade,
Full many a valiant man was slain,
And many a widow made.

---

* Count Zenobio.

Digitized by Google

But I will tell of one much worse,
That happ'd in days of yore,
All in the barren wilderness,
Beside the Jordan shore;

Where Moses led the people forth,
Call'd chosen tribes of God;
And fed them forty years with quails,
And ruled them with a rod.

A dreadful fray once rose among
These self-named tribes of I am;
Where Korah fell, and by his side
Fell Dathan and Abiram.

An earthquake swallow'd thousands up,
And fire came down like stones;
Which slew their sons and daughters all,
Their wives and little ones.

'Twas all about old Aaron's tythes
This murdering quarrel rose;
For tythes are worldly things of old,
That lead from words to blows.

A Jew of Venice has explain'd,
In the language of his nation,
The manner how this fray began,
Of which here is translation.

Digitized by Google

There was a widow old and poor,
Who scarce herself could keep;
Her stock of goods was very small,
Her flock one single sheep.

And when the time of shearing came,
She counted much her gains;
For now, said she, I shall be blest,
With plenty for my pains.

When Aaron heard the sheep was shear'd,
And gave a good increase,
He straightway sent his tything-man,
And took away the fleece.

At this the weeping widow went
To Korah to complain,
And Korah he to Aaron went
In order to explain.

But Aaron said, in such a case,
There can be no forbearing,
The law ordains that thou shalt give
The first fleece of thy shearing.

When lambing time was come about,
This sheep became a dam;
And bless'd the widow's mournful heart,
By bringing forth a lamb.

Digitized by Google

When Aaron heard the sheep had young,
He staid till it was grown,
And then he sent his tything man,
And took it for his own.

Again the weeping widow went
To Korah with her grief,
But Aaron said, in such a case,
There could be no relief.

For in the holy law 'tis writ,
That whilst thou keep'st the stock,
Thou shalt present unto the Lord
The firstling of thy flock.

The widow then in deep distress,
And having nought to eat,
Against her will she kill'd the sheep,
To feed upon the meat.

When Aaron heard the sheep was kill'd,
He sent and took a limb;
Which by the holy law he said
Pertained unto him.

For in the holy law 'tis writ,
That when thou kill'st a beast,
Thou shalt a shoulder and a breast
Present unto the priest.

Digitized by Google

The widow then worn out with grief,
Sat down to mourn and weep,
And in a fit of passion said,
The devil take the sheep.

Then Aaron took the whole away,
And said the laws record,
That all and each devoted thing
Belongs unto the Lord.

The widow went among her kin,
The tribes of Israel rose;
And all the widows young and old,
Pull'd Aaron by the nose.

But Aaron call'd an earthquake up,
And fire from out the sky;
And all the consolation is—
The ***** tells a lie.

Mr. Paine, while in prison at Paris, as has been before mentioned, corresponded with a lady under the signature of "The Castle in the Air," while she addressed her letters from "The Little Corner of the World." For reasons which he knew not, their intercourse was suddenly suspended, and for some time he believed his fair friend to be in obscurity and distress. Many years afterwards how-

Digitized by Google

ever, he met her unexpectedly at Paris, in affluent circumstances, and married to Sir Robert Smith. The following is a copy of one of these poetical effusions.

From the CASTLE IN THE AIR to THE LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD.

In the region of clouds, where the whirlwinds arise,
My CASTLE of FANCY was built;
The turrets reflected the blue of the skies,
And the windows with sun-beams were gilt.

The rainbow sometimes in its beautiful state,
Enamell'd the mansion around;
And the figures that fancy in clouds can create,
Supplied me with gardens and ground.

I had grottoes, and fountains, and orange-tree groves,
I had all that enchantment has told;
I had sweet shady walks, for the GODS and their LOVES,
I had mountains of coral and gold.

But a storm that I felt not, had risen and roll'd,
While wrapp'd in a slumber I lay;
And when I look'd out in the morning, behold
My CASTLE was carried away.

Digitized by Google

It past over rivers, and vallies, and groves,
The world it was all in my view;
I thought of my friends, of their fates, of their loves,
And often, full often of YOU.

At length it came over a beautiful scene,
That NATURE in silence had made;
The place was but small, but 'twas sweetly serene,
And chequer'd with sunshine, and shade.

I gazed, and I envied with painful goodwill,
And grew tired of my seat in the air;
When all of a sudden my CASTLE stood still,
As if some attraction was there.

Like a lark from the sky it came fluttering down,
And placed me exactly in view,
When who should I meet, in this charming retreat,
This corner of calmness, but YOU.

Delighted to find you in honour and ease,
I felt no more sorrow, nor pain;
But the wind coming fair, I ascended the breeze,
And went back with my CASTLE again.

Digitized by Google

The People of the State of New-York, by the Grace of God, Free and Independent, to all to whom these presents shall come or may concern,

SEND GREETING:

KNOW YE, That the annexed is a true copy of the will of THOMAS PAINE, deceased, as recorded in the office of our surrogate, in and for the city and county of New-York. In testimony whereof, we have caused the seal of office of our said surrogate to be hereunto affixed. Witness, Silvanus Miller, Esq. surrogate of said county, at the city of New-York, the twelfth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nine, and of our Independence the thirty-fourth.

SILVANUS MILLER.

THOMAS PAINE.

The last will and testament of me, the subscriber, THOMAS PAINE, reposing confidence in my Creator God, and in no other being, for I know of no other, nor believe in any other,—I Thomas Paine, of the state of New-York, author of the work entitled 'Common Sense,' written in Philadelphia, in 1775, and published in that city the beginning of January 1776, which awaked America to a Declaration of Independence on the fourth of July following, which was as fast as the work could spread through such an extensive country; author also of the several numbers of the American Crisis, "thirteen in all,"

Digitized by Google

published occasionally during the progress of the revolutionary war—the last is on the peace; author also of the 'Rights of Man,' parts the first and second, written and published in London, in 1791 and 92; author also of a work on religion,'Age of Reason' part the first and second ("N. B. I have a third part by me in manuscript and an answer to the Bishop of Llandaff;") author also of a work lately published, entitled 'Examination of the Passages in the New Testament quoted from the Old, and called Prophecies concerning Jesus Christ,' and shewing there are no prophecies of any such person; author also of several other works not here enumerated, "Dissertations on First Principles of Government"—"Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance"—"Agrarian Justice," &c. &c. make this my last will and testament, that is to say: I give and bequeath to my executors herein after appointed, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, thirty shares I hold in the New-York Phœnix Insurance Company which cost me 1470 dollars, they are worth now upwards of 1500 dollars, and all my moveable effects, and also the money that may be in my trunk or elsewhere at the time of my decease, paying thereout the expences of my funeral, IN TRUST as to the said shares, moveables and money for Margaret Brazier Bonneville, wife of Nicholas Bonneville, of Paris, for her own sole and separate use, and at her own disposal, notwithstanding her coverture. As to my farm in New-Rochelle, I give, devise, and bequeath the same to my said executors Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, and to the survivor of them,

THOMAS PAINE.

Digitized by Google

his heirs and assigns for ever, IN TRUST, nevertheless, to sell and dispose of the north side thereof, now in the occupation of Andrew A. Dean, beginning at the west end of the orchard and running in a line with the land sold to —— Coles to the end of the farm, and to apply the money arising from such sale as hereinafter directed. I give to my friends Walter Morton, of the New-York Phœnix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, councellor at law, late of Ireland, two hundred dollars each, and one hundred dollars to Mrs. Palmer, widow of Elihu Palmer, late of New-York, to be paid out of the money arising from said sale, and I give the remainder of the money arising from that sale, one half thereof to Clio Rickman,* of High or Upper Mary-la-Bonne street, London, and the other half to Nicholas Bonneville, of Paris, husband of Margaret B. Bonneville aforesaid: and as to the south part of the said farm, containing upwards of one hundred acres, in trust to rent out the same or otherwise put it to profit, as shall be found most advisable, and to pay the rents and profits thereof to the said Margaret B. Bonneville, in trust for her children, Benjamin Bonneville, and Thomas Bonneville, their education and

* Not a stiver did I ever get, and how the executors can justify their conduct towards me, I know not. Walter Morton has deceived, and used me very scandalously, about this legacy: this may not surprise, but that Thomas Addis Emmet, the expatriated republican from Ireland, should not do me justice in this business, remains unexplained, hurts my feelings exceedingly, and has injured me deeply.

Digitized by Google

maintenance, until they come to the age of twenty-one years, in order that she may bring them well up, give them good and useful learning, and instruct them in their duty to God, and the practice of morality, the rent of the land or the interest of the money for which it may be sold, as herein after mentioned, to be employed in their education. And after the youngest of the said children shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years, in further trust to convey the same to the said children share and share alike in fee simple. But if it shall be thought advisable to my executors and executrix, or the survivor or survivors of them, at any time before the youngest of the said children shall come of age, to sell and dispose of the said south side of the said farm, in that case I hereby authorise and empower my said executors to sell and dispose of the same, and I direct that the money arising from such sale be put into stock, either in the United States bank stock or New York Phœnix insurance company stock, the interest or dividends thereof to be applied as is already directed for the education and maintenance of the said children; and the principal to be transferred to the said children or the survivor of them on his or their coming of age. I know not if the society of people called quakers admit a person to be buried in their burying ground, who does not belong to their society, but if they do or will admit me, I would prefer being buried there: my father belonged to that profession, and I was partly brought up in it. But if it is not consistent with their rules to do this, I desire to be buried on my own

Digitized by Google

farm at New-Rochelle. The place where I am to be buried to be a square of twelve feet, to be enclosed with rows of trees, and a stone or post and rail fence, with a head stone with my name and age engraved upon it, author of 'Common Sense.' I nominate, constitute, and appoint Walter Morton, of the New York Phœnix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, councellor at law, late of Ireland, and Margaret B. Bonneville, executors and executrix to this my last will and testament, requesting the said Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, that they will give what assistance they conveniently can to Mrs. Bonneville, and see that the children be well brought up. Thus placing confidence in their friendship, I herewith take my final leave of them and of the world. I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind; my time has been spent in doing good; and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my Creator God. Dated this eighteenth day of January, in the year one thousand eight hundred and nine, and I have also signed my name to the other sheet of this will in testimony of its being a part thereof.

THOMAS PAINE, [L. S.]

THOMAS PAINE.

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the testator, in our presence, who at his request, and in the presence of each other, have set our names as witnesses thereto, the words "published and declared" first interlined.

WM. KEESE,
JAMES ANGEVINE,
CORNELIUS RYDER.

Printed by Thomas Clio Rickman, 7, Upper Mary-le-bone Street, Portland Place, London.

Digitized by Google

LIST

OF

MR. PAINE'S WORKS.

Trial of Dog Porter, about 1770, printed at Lewes.

Case of Excismen, 1772, printed at Lewes, octavo.

Introduction to the Pennsylvanian Magazine, January 24, 1775, do.

To the publisher of do. on the utility of Magazines, no place no date, do.

Philadelphia, 1775, (supposed) do.

Useful and entertaining Hints on the internal Riches of the Colonies, Pennsylvanian Magazine, Philadelphia, 1775, do.

Reflections on the Death of Lord Clive, Pennsylvanian Magazine, (not seen,) do.

New Anecdote of Alexander the Great, Pennsylvanian Magazine, 1775, do.

Common Sense, Philadelphia, January 1776, do.

The Crisis, 16 numbers, from Dec. 23, 1776, to Dec. 9, 1783, do.

Letter to Abbé Raynall, Philadelphia, 1782, do.

Public Good, being an Examination of the Claim of Virginia to the Vacant Western Territory, &c. Philadelphia, 1784, do.

Dissertation on Government, the Affairs of Bank and Paper-Money, Philadelphia, 1786, do.

Digitized by Google

Prospects on the Rubicon, London, 1787, do.

Letter to the Author of the Republican, Paris, 1791.

Rights of Man, part 1st, London, 1791. do.

Letter to Abbé Sieyes, 1791, do.

Rights of Man, part 2d London, 1792.

Letter to Henry Dundas, London, June 6, 1792, do.

Letter to Lord Onslow, London, June 17, 1792, do.

Letter to Onslow Cranley, commonly called Lord Onslow London, June 21, 1792.

Letter to the Sheriff of Sussex.

Letter to the Addressers, London, July, 1792, ditto.

Letter to Secretary Dundas, on his Detention at Dover, Calais, Sept. 15, 1792, ditto.

Letter to the People of France, (on his Election to the Convention) Paris, Sept. 25, 1792, ditto.

Letter to the Attorney General of England, on the Prosecution against him, Paris, Nov. 11, 1792, ditto.

Reasons for preserving the Life of Louis XVI, Paris, January, 1793.

Age of Reason, part 1, Paris 1794, ditto.

Dissertation on first Principles of Government, Paris, 1794, do.

Speech delivered in the Convention against the Constitution of 1795, do.

Agrarian Justice, Paris 1796, ditto.

Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance, Paris 1796, ditto.

Letter to George Washington, Paris, 1796, ditto.

Age of Reason, part 2, Paris 1796, ditto.

Digitized by Google

Letter to the Hon. Thomas Erskine on the Prosecution of Williams, Paris 1797, ditto.

Letter to the People and Armies of France, on the events of the 18th Fructidor, Paris 1797, ditto.

Letters to the Citizens of the United States, Washington, 1802, and London ditto.

Examinations of the Prophecies, Essay on Dreams, &c. New York, 1807, making 3rd part of the Age of Reason, ditto.

He wrote in addition, from 1805 to 1808 Essays for the American Newspapers.

On the Invasion of England, New York, 1804.

Essay on the Yellow Fever, London, 1807, &c. &c. &c.

London, 1819.

In 1818, Mr. Carlile published the whole *of* Mr. Paine's Works, Theological and Political, in Three regular Volumes, octavo, and which are now publicly sold.

Digitized by Google

BOOKS,

JUST PUBLISHED,

AND WRITTEN

By THOMAS CLIO RICKMAN.

---

1. Poetical Scraps, in 2 vols. with elegant Vignettes, 15s. in boards, and at higher Prices in elegant Bindings.

2. The Fallen Cottage, a Poem in quarto, with an elegant engraved Title Page. Price 2s. 6d.

3. The Evening Walk, a Sentimental Tale, interspersed with poetic Scraps. Written at Seventeen Years of Age. Price 3s. 6d.

4. A select Collection of Epigrams, many of them original. Price 2s. in Boards, or 4s. in elegant fancy Bindings.

5. Mr. Pitt's Democracy Manifested. Price 1s. 6d.

6. Hints on Hats. Price 6d.

7. Man's Rights, a Song, the Music by Kenrick. Price 1s.

8. An Ode on the Emancipation of the Blacks of St. Domingo. Price 1s. 6d. fine copies—1s. common. Inscribed to Earl Stanhope, and prefaced by Capel Lofft, Esq.

Digitized by Google

9. Corruption, a Satire, with a full length Portrait of the Author. Price 3s.

10. The Atrocities of a Convent, in 3 vols. Price 13s. 6d.

11. Elegy to the Memory of Thomas Paine. Price 1s.

By whom are also just Published,

12. A familiar Epistle to the Right Honourable William Pitt, on his Apostacy, &c. &c. Price 1s.

13. Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred. Price 4s. 6d. and 5s.

14. Emigration to America. Price 1s. 6d.

15. Letters from Thomas Paine to the Citizens of America, after an Absence of fifteen Years in Europe. To which are subjoined some Letters between Him and the late General Washington, Mr. Samuel Adams, and the present President of the United States: also some Original Poetry of Mr. Paine's, and a Fac Simile of his Hand Writing in 1803. Price 3s. 6d.

16. An Address to the Society of Friends commonly called Quakers, on excommunicating such of their Members as marry those of other religious Professions. Price 1s. 6d.

17. Rights of Discussion, or a vindication of Dissenters of every Denomination. Price 2s. 6d.

18. Sydney, a Monody, occasioned by the Loss of the Viceroy Packet. Price 1s. 6d.

Digitized by Google

19. Welcome to School, a Song with Music. Price 1s. 6d.

20. Naval Triumphs, a Song with Music. Price 1s. 6d.

21. The Nightingale, ditto. Price 1s.

22. To Arms! to Arms! ditto, price 1s. Set also to a Military Band, by Davy.

23. A correct Portrait of George Fox, the Founder of the Sect of the People called Quakers. This Portrait is engraved from the original Painting of him, by Honthurst (in the year 1654, and in the 30th year of Fox's Age), now in the Possession of the Publisher. Prints 7s. 6d.—Proofs 15s.

24. An exact and high finished Portrait of Thomas Clio Rickman, from a full-size painting by Hazlitt, size 10 Inches by 8. The Price 10s. 6d. Proofs 15s.

25. Also, a whole Length, by Dighton, Price 5s. and 7s. 6d.

26. An incomparable fine Portrait of Thomas Paine. Painted by Romney. Engraved by Sharp. Large Proofs £1. 1s. Prints 10s. 6d. Small Proofs 3s. 6d. Prints 2s. 6d.

Digitized by Google

By the King's Royal Letters Patent,

THE

PATENT SIGNAL TRUMPET,

FOR

INCREASING THE POWER OF SOUND.

Sold only by the Patentee, THOMAS CLIO RICKMAN, Bookseller, and Stationer, Upper Mary-le-Bone Street.

Where all Periodical Publications are regularly served, and Newspapers franked to any part of England. Copper-Plates elegantly engraved. Music, Prints, &c. Printing in all its branches. Book-binding done in every way. Seal Engraving executed in the most accurate and superior manner.

AN EXTENSIVE CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

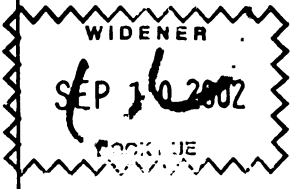
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

The borrower must return this item on or before the last date stamped below. If another user places a recall for this item, the borrower will be notified of the need for an earlier return.

Non-receipt of overdue notices does ***not*** *exempt the borrower from overdue fines.*

Harvard College Widener Library
Cambridge, MA 02138 617-495-2413



Please handle with care.
Thank you for helping to preserve library collections at Harvard.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google